

Challenging Inequality

2022 Annual Scrutiny Report

What we plan to cover

1

Outlining our approach to Challenging Inequality

2

Examples of Challenging Inequality in Action

3

Challenging Inequality – Where next?



Part 1: Our approach

Background and Introduction

The Challenging Inequality Programme was established in July 2020 in the aftermath of the tragic deaths of **Breonna Taylor and George Floyd**, widespread **Black Lives Matter** protests, as well as the clear disproportionate impact of **COVID-19**. These events shone a spotlight on the continual and pervasive impacts of structural inequality and racism.

Tackling inequality sits at the heart of Islington's mission to create a more equal borough and improve the lives of our staff and residents . We are determined to make Islington a place where everyone, whatever their background, has the opportunity to reach their potential and enjoy a good quality of life.

Inequality plays out in many different ways. Local residents face both complex and multiple social, cultural, political and economic challenges. From health and housing, to education and employment, we see vast disparities in the outcomes experienced across the borough. The Challenging Inequality Programme has been created to address the way that we deal with racism, injustice and inequality and create a fairer, more equal Islington for all.

These slides provide an overview of the programme, some examples of our approach in action and our thinking about where next.



Part 1: Our approach

Three workstreams



The programme is made up on three distinct but related workstreams:

1. **Islington as a strategic leader:** our plans to lead by example and use our platform to both listen and influence change across our partnerships with other local organisations
2. **Islington as a service provider and commissioner:** providing local services which help make our borough fairer and more equal – ensuring no one feels marginalised or excluded from accessing a decent home, employment or education or any other local service
2. **Islington as an employer:** to make our workplace fairer, more equal, more inclusive and more representative of the communities we serve.

Part 1: Our approach

Governance Arrangements

A fundamental strength of the programme is the ability to provide opportunities to gather input from a variety of stakeholders which include council leaders, members, officers, community partners, VCS organisations and residents.

This approach is firmly embedded in the programme structure and informs the way that actions are identified and agreed.

- The **Race Equality Working Group** is a member-led group with focus on race equality, scrutinising the race equality agenda.
- The **Challenging Inequality Programme Board** is made up of directors from each directorate who are responsible for directorate equality action plans.
- We created a **Challenging Inequality Partnership Working Group** with a number of our strategic partner organisation to explore how we can further improve equality outcomes through joint working and a collaborative approach.
- The **Challenging Inequality Coalition** is a community led forum allowing for community input into shaping the challenging inequality agenda and providing additional support and services to residents
- **Staff forums** inform challenging inequality within the workplace maintaining an effective channel of communication between staff issues and the challenging inequality plan.



Part 1: Our approach

Informed by the community



Through our ambition to create a 'more equal future' for our residents as set out in our strategic plan we launched our Let's Talk Islington borough wide engagement.



Through Let's Talk Islington we wanted to:



Better understand the lived experiences of Islington residents



Explore the different perceptions of inequality/equity



Identify the top priorities for the borough



Understand the different factors that drive inequality in the borough

Let's Talk: In Numbers

Over 6000 local people engaged...

Worked with over 50 participants in participatory projects

Almost **1600** local people engaged with our survey

68 people participated in 11 community workshops

3 VCS groups submitted evidence

Driven engagement online with 2,500 social media interactions

20 teachers told us about the inequality they see

Across engagement carried out by colleagues in Public Health, Community Safety, Inclusive Economy and others we've heard from **over 3000** local people on what matters to them

Almost **700** young people took part across 15 workshops

3 public webinars to explore solutions

Some highlights

-  Working with **24 VCS organisations** to facilitate workshops, gather evidence and disseminate our survey
-  Distributing **surveys to 21 venues** including libraries, leisure centres, community centres and GP practices
-  Delivering 25 outreach sessions in communities at **17 locations across the borough**

5 participatory projects

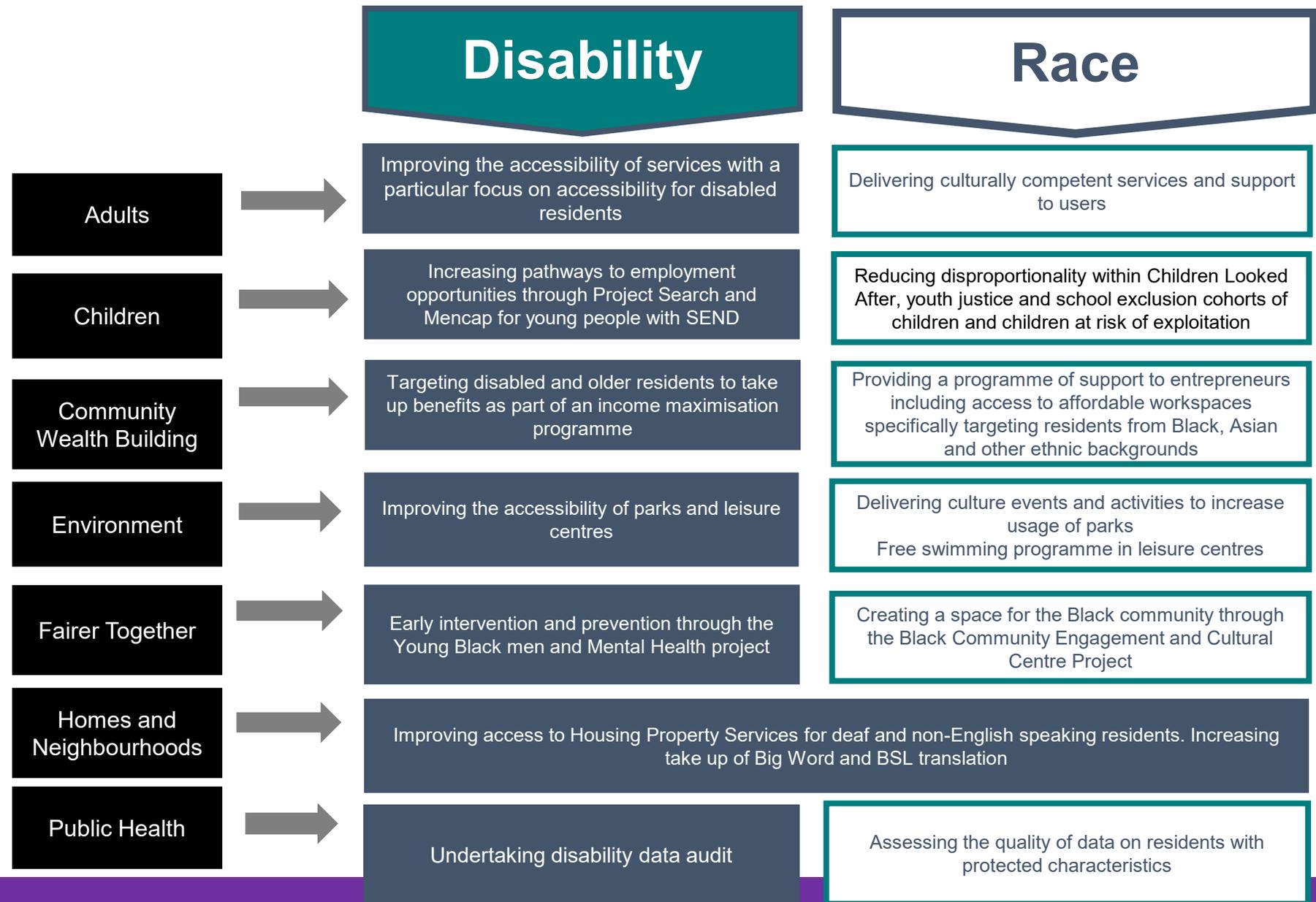
-  Documentary film making workshops with the LGBTQ+ community
-  Puppetry with young people with special educational needs and disabilities
-  Storytelling with older people experiencing poverty
-  Lunch clubs with school children in deprived areas
-  Mapping with people living in overcrowded and / or private rented accommodation

Supported by our Inequality Task Force...

- 8** group members
- 3** intensive workshops
- ?** proposals for change 

Part 1: Our approach Council-wide action

Through the Challenging Inequality programme, each directorate has been supported to produce an equalities action plan. This year equalities leads were asked to expand plans to prioritise disability alongside race (which was the focus the previous year). Key actions so far include:



Part 1: Our approach

Building strong foundations

- ✓ The Challenging Inequality programme **is actively inclusive** and **has embedded an approach that creates opportunities** for council leaders, officers, members, partners, community organisations and residents to **inform the actions that need to be taken in order to tackle inequality in the borough**
- ✓ There are **clear lines of accountability** and responsibility for **delivering change and impact to residents**
- ✓ Each department has **a clear and measurable plan of action** which outlines the **outcomes they will deliver** to address inequality with their service areas
- ✓ Equality action plans **clearly define the issues actions will address** and have a clear focus on priority areas of inequality for the council: **Race and Disability**
- ✓ **Our workforce have been upskilled on equality, diversity and inclusion** through increased training and development opportunities, our equality events and learning offer and greater involvement in equalities conversations across all levels of the organisation
- ✓ Overall, our organisation is **more 'equality literate'** having a greater understanding who inequality affects, the impact it has, how and why. This has led to **better sign posting of services and support for residents**
- ✓ We are **better equipped to identify areas of disproportionality/inequality** to promote early intervention.
- ✓ We are **using data and evidence more effectively** to interrogate our thinking, planning and behaviours
- ✓ The **perception and culture of Islington council is changing for the better** as the council appears more accessible and the quality of interactions, reach, engagement and support for residents improves

Part 2: Challenging Inequality in Action

Key examples

Elevate Young Black Men and Mental Health



Charisse Monero

Community Wellbeing and Engagement

Supporting Under-represented Entrepreneurs and Affordable workspace Programme



Caroline Wilson

Community Wealth Building

Parks for Health



John Thorne

Environment

Parent Champions



Curtis Ashton

Children Services

Black Community and Cultural Centre



Sharie Omoragbon

Community Wellbeing and Engagement

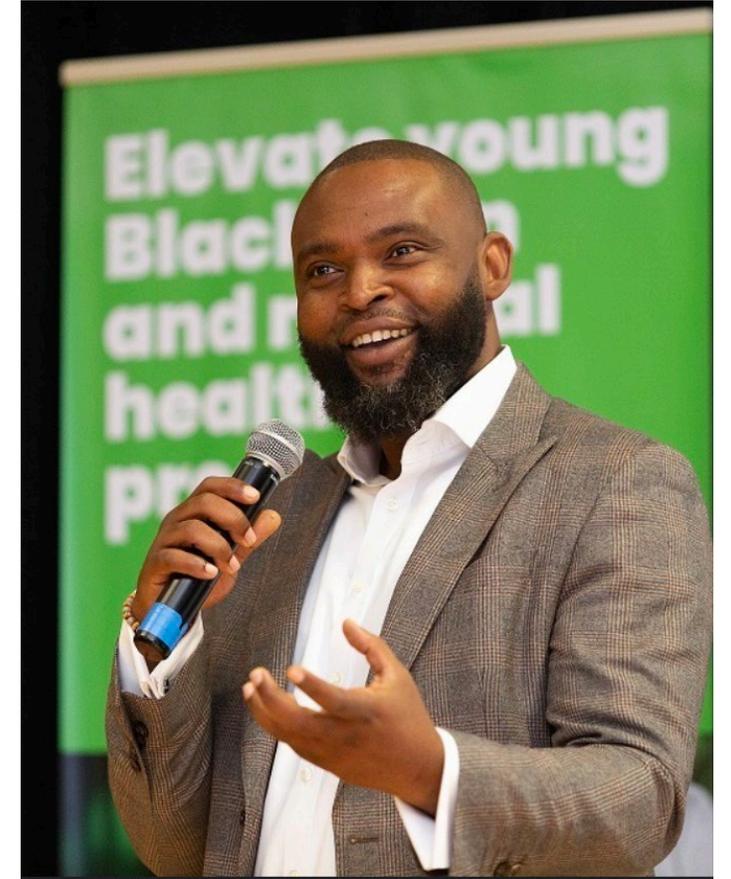
Part 2: Challenging Inequality in Action

Elevate Young Black Men and Mental Health programme

- The Young Black Men and Mental Health programme is a pioneering and innovative programme designed to improve mental health wellbeing outcomes for young Black men, wellbeing and life outcomes for young Black men. Islington Council and the NHS successfully received investment funding of £1.6 million to lead this innovative mental health programme which will help to create a better future for young Black men and boys and support the council's and NHS efforts to tackle inequality.
- The three-year programme, will see a holistic approach to mental health issues among young Black men in Islington, with the aims of improving personal mental health and wellbeing, aspirations, and life opportunities, while reducing exclusions.

It has four pillars of delivery:

1. **BAM 'Becoming a Man' programme** – a pioneering 24 - month programme delivered in three secondary schools by a full time BAM counsellor based in each school setting
2. **The Elevate Innovation Hub** – delivering holistic and wrap around therapeutic support through a small team of Community Therapeutic Coaches led by a Clinical Psychologist.
3. **Training up Barbers to become 'Community Mental Health Ambassadors'**
4. **Rolling out cultural competency and anti - racist practice training across the workforce**



Part 2: Challenging Inequality in Action

Elevate Young Black Men and Mental Health programme

Key Achievements so far:

- Secured strong working partnership with Mental Health Foundation to roll out BAM (Becoming A Man) Programme in Islington schools.
- Engaged with over 43 young Black boys and men to design and develop the young Black men and mental health Programme through focus groups, written testimonials, design workshops & engaged stakeholders in its design & development
- BAM 'Becoming a Man'- Secured three Secondary schools to deliver BAM in schools – Islington Arts and Media, Beacon High and Central Foundation – so far excellent support from schools. Recruited to all three BAM counsellors following a rigorous recruitment process. The three BAM counsellors commenced in post in September 2022. We will launch 15 BAM groups across three schools and expect to support up to 225 pupils in its first year.
- Successful recruitment and appointments to Senior Clinical Lead and Clinical Psychologist for the new Elevate Innovation Hub, both Senior Clinical Lead and Clinical Psychologist commenced in post in October 2022. Recruitment is underway for the three Elevate Therapeutic Practitioner / Community Coaches for the Hub. New Elevate Innovation Hub to launch, take referrals and commence working with young people in December 2022
- The Barbers Round Chair Project - engaged with 5 Islington Barbershops – all barbers have completed mandatory training; First Aid Mental Health Training; MECC (Make every contact count); Safeguarding level 2 training;
- To deliver long term system change in tackling mental health inequalities a whole systems training programme has been developed. Successfully commissioned the Staff College a training organisation to roll out cultural competency and anti-racist practice training programme for frontline practitioners & system leaders across LBI, VCS, CCG, Primary Care, Police, Social Care, CAMHS, YO etc – to commence from December/ January 23
- A young Black men and mental health 'Hero' short film was produced in partnership with RAW London.
- Successful Launch event of the Young Black Men and Mental Health Programme on 1st November and has attracted significant and excellent national media interest from the Guardian, BBC London, BBC World, ITV news, BBC Radio, MJ, Islington Tribune, Gazette, The Telegraph, the Voice and RAW London has submitted 'hero film' for multiple advertising awards.

Part 2: Challenging Inequality in Action

Supporting Under-represented Entrepreneurs

- **Targeted Covid grant support** to locations with approximately one third of grants granted to Black, Asian and Minority owned businesses and over 40% to female-owned local small or micro businesses, to help survive and recover from economic lockdowns.
- **New partnership with Action for Racial Equality targeting start-up businesses** from under-represented groups, with 10 business owners receiving 1:1 support, and over 30 businesses taking up the offer of 8 masterclasses. Full impact evaluation December 2022.
- Through **LIFT programme in digital/tech sector**, placed 19 Islington residents into paid tech, digital and knowledge economy roles (inc. 12-week paid internships), over 500 participants in community outreach programmes, and supported 69 residents through employability and training programmes including the Digital Marketing School. Nearly 70% of participants coming from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds. Over 70% of the start-ups supported by LIFT have been female led start-ups – 90 in total.
- Formed partnership with **Black Pound Movement**. Surveyed nearly 40 Black-owned businesses to identify barriers to growth. Promoted Black-owned businesses as part of Black History Month, and planning a special event street market.



Part 2: Challenging Inequality in Action

Affordable Workspace Programme

- Overall, generated more than **£1.2m of social value** for local people
- Contractual obligations on equalities and inclusion in all current and future sites, for all of our workspace operators
- Partnership with **Outlandish/Space4**
 - Facilitated 45 software developer apprenticeships of 12-15 months duration.
 - Supporting the growth of democratically owned business models, with a focus on foundational economy and target cohorts – at least 40% minority-owned
 - Empowered Talent – a workers co-operative talent and training agency, with an ethos of enabling disabled performers to achieve their goal of working as professionals in a notoriously difficult and image-oriented industry
- Partnership with **Fashion Enter**
 - Secured employment for 11 people, nine women from minority backgrounds, six local residents.
 - Ran a free accredited course in stitching and pattern cutting leading to employment for two more people.
 - Inspired one course attendee to start their own business, the other to successfully apply for employment with another designer.



Part 2: Challenging Inequality in Action

Parent Champions

We secured funding from the **London Violence Reduction Unit (VRU)** for the **Parental Support Project to provide community based, peer-to-peer support to families as part of a public health approach to violence reduction.** The multi-level prevention programme includes:

- A comprehensive on-line training offer to parents/carers
- Transition to secondary school support for year 6/7 children and their families
- 1:1 support, mental health and therapeutic support to parents/carers
- Violence Reduction Parent Champion programme, with an active group of parent champions who - organise their own training sessions, speak at public engagements, and provide peer to peer support.

During 2020 - 2022 the VRU Parental Support engaged 336 parents and 24 young people across Islington and Camden.

Originally funded as a pilot project, the Parental Support project was due to end in March 2022, but the London VRU **extended funding for 2022 -2023 due to the project's success and impact, particularly in engaging parents/carers from diverse backgrounds.** We are currently in discussion with the VRU about continuing funding after April 2023.

Part 2: Challenging Inequality in Action

Parent Champions

The VRU have advised that it is **committed to making the case for continued funding based on the success of the project** as is evidenced in the highly positive London Met University evaluation of the VRU Parental Support completed in April 2022, which stated that:

‘Although other services may offer similar types of interventions, the Parental Support Project provides a blueprint of how to ensure parents feel valued, listened to and able to address issues that they, their families, and the wider community face’

(London Met University, Dr James Alexander and Andrea Streng-Lazzerini, April 2022)

Achievements include:

93% of parents said the support helped them improve engagement with their child’s school

86% of parents said their child got the right support.

24 children were supported to make a positive transition to secondary school

The project is also aligned to the **Somali Task Force** which was established in 2020 following the murders of two young Somali men in the borough. **52 parents and carers from the Somali community** within the borough have completed the parent champions network training since July 2021 with two graduation events held in person at the Platform Youth Hub.

Part 2: Challenging Inequality in Action

Parks for Health: Windrush Project, Caledonian Park

The council was awarded a grant from the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to run a large project celebrating the Windrush Generation

- The project started with a large-scale picnic in Caledonian Park on Windrush Day on Wednesday, 22 June 2022
- Over the summer holidays, young people at Prospex recorded stories from the Windrush generation whilst learning new skills in video and audio editing
- The community art project created a wall mural for the amphitheatre in Caledonian Park, inspired by Windrush stories from local people
- Stories about lives in the Caribbean, journeys to the UK, and experiences once here have been gathered and turned into drama monologues. These were performed in Caledonian Park in October



Part 2: Challenging Inequality in Action

Gillespie Park/Ecology Centre & Other Activities

- 2021 onwards. Site meetings in Gillespie Park and Wray Crescent with Jannaty, which works with Muslim women, to encourage park usage
- October. Park walk with Muslim guide and parks officer (pictured); meeting point at Finsbury Park mosque. To be repeated in November.
- 5 November (onwards). Club Cakeface for Muslim women: no boys/babies/booze. Women can remove head scarf. 20 women attended
- 130 young people visited Gillespie Park on 6 November in an event organised with Finsbury Park mosque and Brightstart
- Seasonal intergenerational events at Gillespie Park (and Highbury Fields) in partnership with Bright Start & Age UK Islington. Popular with Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic Communities (pictured far right)
- Brightstart engagement with families in parks giving out free food: 169 families in Gillespie Park (810 families in Highbury Fields). 40% Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic Communities
- Also, increasing number of Green Social Prescribing referrals by Age UK to parks. 2019/20 112 ; 2020/21 37; 2021/22 141; 2022/23 Apr-Sept: 160 (41% Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic Communities)



Part 2: Challenging Inequality in Action

Our equality events and learning offer 2022

The table below outlines the most popular/best attended events:

Event name	Themes covered	Attendees
Holocaust Memorial Day 2022	Gender, race, age and faith and disability	110
Windrush Day 2022	Gender, race, age, faith and disability	168
Black History Month 2020 Activities across the month engagement	Gender, race, age, faith and leadership	452
Islamophobia Awareness Month 22 (Two events so far more events to be delivered)	Gender, race, age	115
BH365 events	Race, disability, socio-economic	3000
Eid in the Park (working with Muslim Welfare House)	Faith, open to all residents	5000

- The team have delivered **25 events so far this year**
- The total number of **residents participating/engaging in events so far this year exceeds 10,000**
- **Seven events have been commissioned to other organisations/groups to deliver**
- In addition, **the team supported the delivery of 17 other events** that do not feature in the equality events calendar
- There has been **an increase in demand** for flag raising events and responsibility has landed with our team
- **Increasing enquiries** from other teams to draw on corporate **event management expertise.**



Part 2: Challenging Inequality in Action

Black Community & Cultural Centre

A new project started earlier this year to establish a **Black Community and Cultural Centre** in the borough. We are exploring **three distinct elements** of the offer:

Community (And wellbeing focus)	Cultural	Commercial
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mental health awareness and support -Health & fitness classes / sporting activities and events -Antenatal and parenting classes -Domestic abuse support and services -Counselling and therapy services Employment and training support -Libraries and heritages stories/events -Youth mentoring sessions -Black Governors forum meetings Saturday School and tuition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Art exhibitions - Art and crafts workshops - Dance, drama/theatre workshops - Cultural cooking classes -Community walks - Celebration & engagement event events i.e. BH365, Windrush, Independence days etc -workshops and sharing circles - Black History talks and seminars 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pop up shops Community Café -Office hire space -Industrial kitchen/catering -Disabled toilets/parking -Allotment/gardening activities -Mother and baby stay and plays -Networking events -Mother and baby stay and plays -Networking events - After school clubs

- At this early stage of project development, expressions of interest have been positively receive from a broad range of local organisation. Residents from the Black community came together in full force to share ideas this November.
- It is being proposed that 16-18 Hornsey Road is to become home to the Black Cultural Centre as an immediate response to removing some of the barriers and challenges that exist for Black residents from African and Caribbean heritage
- This will enable **delivery of the manifesto commitment and the ambition set out in our Islington Together 2030 Plan** to make Islington a fairer, more equal place to live.
- Delivering the Centre will **allow minority and marginalised groups access** to services individuals may not be accessing sufficiently thus providing good social value
- Mobilising the offer for **minoritised and marginalised groups** will create opportunities for the leading organisation to submit **funding bids to gain further investment** (including the potential for capital investment for a larger site) **in our borough allowing us to increase our offer/services** to residents

Part 3: Where next?

A new approach to driving change

The Challenging Inequality Programme has laid firm foundations for our approach to tackling racism, injustice and inequality. A foundation that focuses on outcomes and brings our Islington community together as one.

We have gained greater knowledge and insight into inequality through our Let's Talk Islington engagement which has provided a deeper understanding of the issues and challenges Islington residents are facing in a climate set to further exacerbate poverty and inequality during the cost-of-living crisis.

Appreciating the fact that we have made an excellent start, we also know that we cannot afford to become complacent during a time that is going to be more difficult and challenging for everyone. We acknowledge the need to continue to be bold, creative and forward thinking in order to tackle the hurdles ahead. Because of this we have begun planning a different approach for the next phase of our journey, to ensure we deliver tangible change on the issues that residents think matter most.



Part 3: Where next?

Outcome focused action learning

Action Learning is a method for individual and organisational development based on groups of colleagues meeting over time to tackle real problems or issues in order to get things done; reflecting and learning from their experience and from each other as they attempt to drive change.

The process of action learning encourages thinking about a problem from a new perspective, questioning and clarifying the problem and reflecting on the steps it takes to solve the problem.

Action learning develops powerful work teams that perform quickly with cohesiveness to achieve team goals. Each time an action learning team meet, problem solving capabilities improve.



Part 3: Where next?

Using outcome-focused action learning to tackle inequality in Islington

- Identify 5-6 key outcomes that our residents have said are important to them and commit to achieve change – with clear lines of accountability
- Introduce an inclusive programme of **action learning for each priority outcome**
- **Commission an external equalities advisor** to work alongside us and facilitate the process, providing independent support and challenge
- Source and invite **subject matter experts to a “kick off” session for each learning set**
- Use sessions to **explore issues** that are **impacting Islington residents** in depth
- Leaders will **expand their knowledge** and **understanding of an issue, interrogate action plans, undertake critical thinking and develop creative solutions**
- Groups will participate in a cycle of **questioning, listening and learning**
- Staff and stakeholders will **work collaboratively to identify and develop informed actions**
- New and refreshed **actions will be implemented** and monitored for impact.
- An **annual conference** will be held each year to disseminate learning, best practice and outcome and impact of this new approach

Challenging Inequality is embedded in everything we do

<https://youtu.be/HmnWslCxz4k>