



**ISLINGTON TOGETHER
LET'S TALK ISLINGTON SUMMARY**



ISLINGTON

For a more equal future

Let's Talk Islington.

Inequality in Islington is, sadly, not new. And although we've made great strides in tackling inequality, national and global challenges – a decade of austerity, the Covid-19 pandemic, and now a devastating cost-of-living crisis – mean there is still so much more to do. That's why we have committed to working with our diverse communities to create a more equal future for our borough by 2030.



In order to create a more equal Islington, we have to understand what this looks like to local people. So in December 2021, we launched Let's Talk Islington, our biggest ever programme of public engagement into inequality. We wanted everyone who lives, works, studies and accesses services in Islington to tell us about the inequality they experience in their everyday lives and their aspirations for our borough's future.

Through Let's Talk, we wanted to do something fundamentally different in how we engage with you. We wanted to empower voices we don't normally hear from; people who don't know how to engage with the council, who feel marginalised, who lack trust in public services. We wanted to reach as many of our diverse communities as possible, avoiding 'engagement fatigue' and creating a much richer picture of what inequality looks like locally.

With this in mind, from November 2021 – August 2022, we went out and about across Islington, hearing from over 6,000 people about the challenges in your day-to-day lives and how you think we can work together to build a more equal future.

You shared your experiences with us on social media alongside survey consultations online and in spaces across the borough, such as parks, libraries and leisure centres. Many of you also engaged in interactive workshops with 12 voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations. Almost 700 schoolchildren participated in student-facilitated sessions across 13 schools, while professionals working with young people fed back in an online survey.

We also worked with local partners to deliver fun, creative, and resident-led engagement opportunities including: map-making of the local community and walking tours with adults living in overcrowded housing, storytelling with over 55s accessing a community lunch-club in a deprived area of the borough, documentary film-making workshops with the LGBTQ+ community, puppetry workshops for children with Special Educational Needs (SEN), and anthropology classes with year 6 school pupils in Islington schools.

This report provides a summary analysis of all the Let's Talk Islington findings and outlines the methodology of our approach, including how we developed the creative projects. We hope you find it informative and inspiring.

Please feel free to use the rich data and insight in this report, including quotes from adults and children. For a full breakdown of detailed findings and demographics on every theme, please refer to our [data evidence pack](#).

For any questions, please email engagement@islington.gov.uk.

How we did it

Methodology.

Inequality is complex and can look very different for different groups. We approached inequality with an **intersectional** lens: class, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, religion, and other social or identity factors all interact with each other and with financial conditions to produce unique outcomes for individuals, depending on their circumstances. But we also recognised that **poverty** is the common thread linking many inequalities, including health, housing, and access to green space or public services.

This framing underpinned how we researched and designed our 3-strand engagement approach, which we will explore in further detail in the rest of this report:

- Mass engagement: large-scale opportunities for local people of all ages to share their perspectives and priorities, both in-person and online.
- Schools: medium-scale engagement with primary and secondary pupils across a range of schools in Islington

- Targeted engagement: smaller, selective engagement with groups we know are more likely to be living in poverty (young people, older people), groups affected by identity-based inequality or who have complex needs, and groups we know experience inequality but for whom we have little local data (LGBTQ+ residents, overcrowded tenants).

We deliberately used different touchpoints for reaching out to hear from new voices through our local VCS organisations or through our existing champions and co-production networks.

Let's Talk staff also made a real effort to go out into a range of community spaces across the borough to carry out survey engagement, rather than expect communities to come to

us. By going to spaces where the community gathers, but which aren't (or at least aren't obviously) run by the council, we were able to hear the views of people who may never or only rarely encounter council staff.

Methods for each project are outlined in the rest of this report.

Demographics

These overall findings are based on two kinds of data samples: **convenience** (people who heard about or saw our engagement activities and chose to take part) and **purposive** (specific groups we intentionally reached out to in order to capture particular perspectives). The data therefore **cannot be generalised** to the borough population as a whole, but nonetheless provides very useful insight into the views of thousands of people in Islington. We did not collect demographic data for all of

our engagement activities but strived to reach as many diverse communities as possible. You can read about the different communities we engaged with in the rest of the report.

Our main demographic data collection was through our open survey, which had almost 1,600 responses. We asked every survey respondent to optionally fill out information about their demographic data but not everyone chose to provide this, meaning we were missing demographic information for 28-54% of survey respondents, depending on the question. Overall, men, residents of White and Mixed ethnic backgrounds and those under 45 are underrepresented relative to the total Islington population. You can see all the demographic characteristics of survey respondents below.

Characteristics of survey respondents

Gender

- Female: 43%
- Male*: 28%
- Non-binary: 1%
- Prefer to self-describe: 0.1%
- Prefer not to say/missing: 28%

Trans

- No: 69%
- Yes: 1%
- Prefer not to say/missing: 30%

Sexual orientation

- Heterosexual: 51%
- Gay/Lesbian: 5%
- Bisexual: 3%
- Prefer not to say/missing: 40%

Annual household income

- Less than £20K: 13%
- £20-39K: 11%
- £40-59K: 9%
- £60-99K: 8%
- £100K+: 6%
- Prefer not to say/missing: 54%

Index of multiple deprivation

- 1 (most deprived): 11%
- 2: 20%
- 3: 24%
- 4: 9%
- 5 (least deprived): 0.2%
- Prefer not to say/missing: 35%

Ethnicity

- White*: 42%
- Black: 8%
- Asian: 5%
- Mixed*: 5%
- Other: 4%
- Prefer not to say/missing: 35%

Age group

- Under 16: 2%
- 16-24*: 4%
- 25-44*: 26%
- 45-64: 27%
- 65+: 13%
- Prefer not to say/missing: 27%

Disability status

- No disability: 45%
- Any disability: 24%
- Prefer not to say/missing: 31%

* Underrepresented relative to the overall LBI population, excluding prefer not to say respondents

What we heard

Across all of the Let's Talk engagement, perceptions of inequality within and beyond Islington were widespread. Adults predominantly spoke about **disparities in income and wealth** affecting opportunities and services. Students also mentioned differences in access, but their concept of inequality was much more **interpersonal**, giving examples of how people are treated differently.

Housing and safety were top priorities in VCS workshops and in the open survey across gender, ethnic groups and disability status, though there were some differences by income group which you can explore in more detail in our **evidence pack**. Residents highlighted the **interconnections of inequality** across priority areas and importance of joined up work.

Students spoke about a broad range of **aspirations**. When asked about Islington in 10 years' time, adults most frequently wrote about a greener and cleaner borough, despite this being a lower priority for action.

Residents also raised a **wide range of other issues** affecting their lives including their:

- Pride in Islington's **inclusiveness and diversity**, although some raised concerns about divisions and exclusion
- Concern that Islington is increasingly **unaffordable**
- Desire for **more meaningful dialogue, engagement and action and more responsive council services**, and frustration that they do not feel like they are being heard, particularly those opposed to low traffic neighbourhoods

- Concerns and aspirations related to health and wellbeing, employment and education, although these themes were raised less often

Residents of all ages offered **ideas** on how to tackle inequality and improve the borough, including repurposing existing buildings, progressive taxation, civic education, easy read signage, community energy hubs, specific services and support, and more opportunities for people of different ages and backgrounds to interact.

In the following pages, we will explore themes from each of our engagement approaches. For free text responses from the surveys and group discussions, we have highlighted prominent themes and any notable similarities and differences across respondents. In some cases, residents made directly opposing comments. It is therefore important to remember that 'resident voice' is not uniform and that continuing an open dialogue with the full breadth of our diverse communities is essential to understand the range of lived experiences and progress together to a more equal future.

Open survey

Our main survey ran from November 2021 – March 2022, prior to heightened public attention to the cost-of-living crisis. The survey ran online and was supplemented with paper survey responses gathered at the local venues listed below. Relative to the borough population, males, under 45s and people of white and mixed ethnicities are

underrepresented. We received 1,561 valid responses (some responses were nonsensical e.g. "dhhhdh" so we excluded those from our final count).

"Let's Talk About...The Future of Islington – open survey"

In 10 years' time, what kind of place would you like Islington to be?

Why do you (dis)agree that Islington is a fair and equal place for all?

In your experience, to what extent do you agree or disagree that Islington is a fair and equal place for all who live here? (5-point scale: strongly agree to strongly disagree)

All of us in Islington have to decide how we can improve life in our borough – for now, and in the future. What do you think we can do to improve life in Islington, together?

Tell us your priorities below.

- Affordable, decent, secure homes
- Well-paid jobs with prospects
- Initiatives to support people's mental health
- Initiatives and opportunities for young people
- Multi-cultural community events and spaces
- Reduced rates of anti-social behaviour
- Cleaner streets and greener spaces
- Initiatives to tackle the climate emergency locally

As well as online submissions, the project team ran pop up outreach activities to speak directly and administer paper surveys to local people at the following places:

- Andover Estate
- Andover Community Centre
- Chapel Market
- Finsbury Library
- Archway Library
- Archway Market
- Central Library
- Fortune Street Park
- St. Luke's Community Centre
- Highbury Fields Playground
- Whittington Park
- Finsbury Park Mosque
- Sobell Leisure Centre
- Brickworks Community Centre
- Highbury Station
- N4 Library
- Iron Monger Row Baths

Key findings:

Just under half (47%) of survey respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that Islington was a fair and equal place, compared to 29% who agreed or strongly agreed. The top reasons for this were disparity, particularly in income and wealth, noted by residents across the income spectrum.

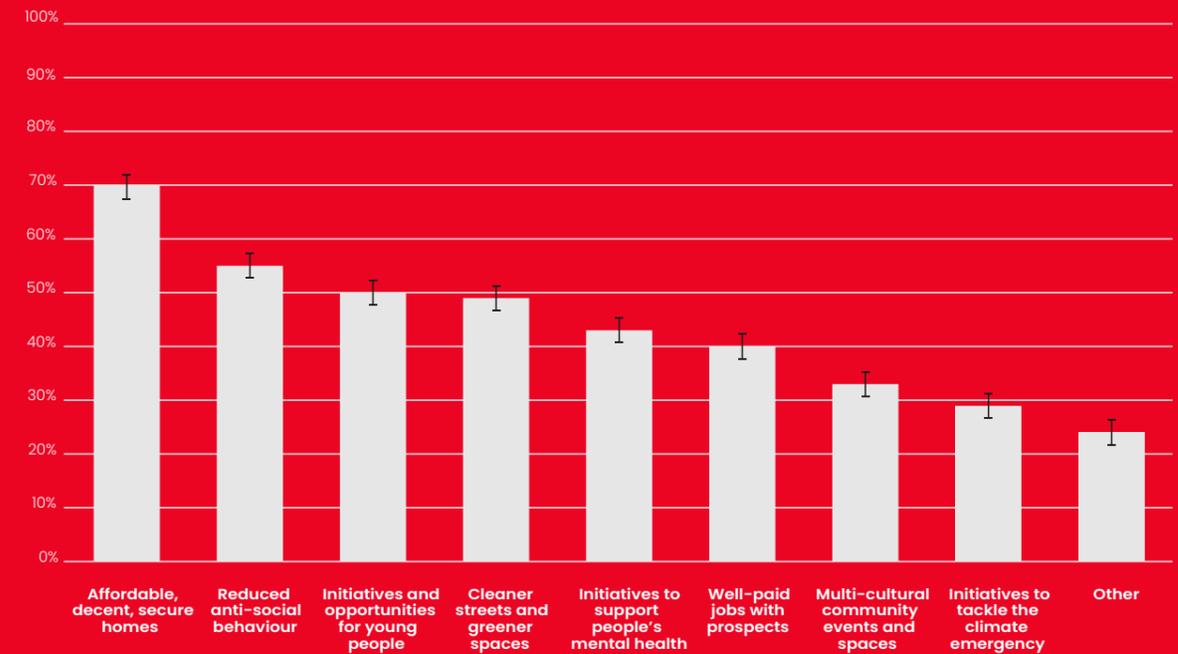
- “There are **huge discrepancies in income and wealth** in the Borough and those with less income don’t have **access to all the opportunities and activities** of those with high incomes.” (Female, 65+, White other, £20-39K)
- “There is one extreme to another in regards to **poverty, income and housing.**” (Female, 25-44, Black/Black British, £40-59K)



Survey respondents most prominently aspired for a greener and cleaner Islington in 10 years’ time, as well as a stronger and safe community with affordable housing.

- “A **safe, organically diverse, affordable, welcoming** place to live.” (Black Caribbean female, 45-64, £40-59K)
- “**More greenery, more community** events for families to get together. **Good quality housing** for people where people don’t notice the difference between council and private rented properties.” (Asian female, 65+ £20-39K)
- “**Greener**, with more people able to access green spaces for physical and mental health, more pocket parks outside schools and cafes **where people can meet**, chat and rest. More benches to encourage more walking. More recycling on estates. More trees. Less traffic. Carbon neutral.” (Female, 65+)
- **Housing** was by far the top priority for how we can improve life in Islington (70%), rated highest across all ethnic groups, gender and disability status. This was followed by **tackling ASB** (55%), though a higher proportion of older residents prioritised this compared to younger residents. Around 50% of respondents prioritised more initiatives for young people and cleaner streets and greener spaces.
- “Islington housing is **no longer affordable for “normal” people**. It’s become ridiculously expensive and only affordable to the elite” (no demographic data)
- More **community safety** measures. Feeling safe; there is a lot of crime and anti-social behaviour. Better communication between council/police and residents.” (Pakistani female, 45-64)
- “The **streets are dirty** [...] I love Islington but there are too many dirty streets which is bad for our health.” (Female, mixed ethnicity)

Priorities for improving life in Islington



Housing was by far the top priority (70%), rated highest across all ethnic groups, gender and disability status.

Other priorities/comments, related to:

- How the council operates and interacts with residents
- Quality of services
- LTNs
- Concerns around finance
- Safety
- Education

Student-led discussions in schools

From December 2021 – May 2022, students facilitated small group discussions among their peers and younger students, sometimes with the support of school and/or Islington Council staff. These took place in different settings including School Council sessions, form time, 'Philosophy 4 Children' (enquiry-based learning) or specially-arranged

discussion sessions. Students and teachers were provided with a workshop structure and briefed on Let's Talk; however, the way in which questions were framed and discussions were facilitated likely varied across groups. We did not collect demographic data for this group.

"Inequality in Islington – student discussions"

What does inequality mean to you?

Can you give an example of when you've seen inequality in your area? What could be done to help the situation?

What could be done to make Islington a fairer and more equal place?

If you were the Leader of Islington Council, what is the most important change you would make to improve life in Islington for young people?

How can you show fairness and equality today?

Schools were selected to reflect a range of income levels based on the proportion of students eligible for the Deprivation Pupil Premium (DPP), i.e. the percentage of pupils who qualify for free school meals, which ranged from 34% to 82%.

Primary: Drayton Park Primary School, Pakeman, Montem

Secondary: Beacon High, City and Islington College*, Elizabeth Garrett Anderson school, St Mary Magdelene Academy Sixth Form, London Screen Academy Sixth Form*, Stoke Newington School and Sixth form*

Independent: Northbridge Senior School*

Special educational needs (SEN): Samuel Rhodes, The Bridge School, Richard Cloudesley

* DPP not available

Key findings:

Inequality was largely seen by students as the **unfair or unkind treatment of others**, often related to **protected** characteristics. When students spoke about specific subgroups, they mentioned **race and ethnicity, disability and gender** most often. There was also the understanding that inequality involved different levels of access between groups: resources, opportunities and rights. Inequality was seen by young participants as something **beyond people's control**, the result of a wider social system. Across ages and school types, there was widespread awareness of social and economic inequalities and a desire for more equal access to opportunities.

- "When you look at someone/**treat someone differently** because of their race, religion, gender, sexuality, disability, intellect, social status/job or age." (Secondary school student)

The most common examples of inequality students raised were: unkind treatment of others, homelessness, gender inequality and stereotypes, lack of access and services for people with disabilities, and racism.

- "**Some people can't get houses and others do. Some people can afford food and some people can't.** There are **not enough facilities for people with disabilities** to mix and have fun." (SEN secondary school student)
- "[There is] lots of **homelessness**...and shops are **increasing their prices**. Some areas people do not care for so they are not nice to go, they are **scary and dangerous** with **unkind people**. Some jobs **women get paid less than men**." (SEN secondary school students)

Students raised a range of ideas for making Islington a fairer and more equal place to live across housing, accessibility, the environment, ASB, education, and youth services.

- "[I] **want lots of jobs that are interesting**, and we can all do. **Houses that are cheap that I can afford to live in.** I want it to be safe place where there are no gangs or knife crime." (Secondary school student)
- "Making sure we all **look after the environment** and investing in things like solar power" (Primary school student)



VCS workshops

From December – May 2022, LBI and VCS staff facilitated small group discussions of 2-14 people online, in person and using a hybrid

approach. The host organisation recruited people to take part. We did not collect demographic data for this group.

“Inequality in Islington – VCS workshops”

12 workshops involving 77 people in total

What do you like about working or studying in Islington?

What could make it better?

From the following list of 10 topics, which are the 3 most important to you?

- Air pollution and noise
- Green spaces and parks
- Crime and safety
- Inequality based on who you are
- Opportunities for young people
- Local employment opportunities
- Housing
- Community activities and social networks
- Good quality services for residents
- Mental health

How do these issues make you or your community feel? What are the effects on your life?

What are the 3 most important changes we could make to reduce inequality in Islington?

Why? What difference would these changes make to your life or the lives of people in your community?

Profile of participating organisations

We held workshops with residents in partnership with the following groups:

- Prospex Youth Centre (*youth hub and activities for young people*)
- You Lead (*Targeted Youth Support and Youth Offending Service service – user group*)
- Bright Start parent champions (*parent volunteers*)
- Elfrida Society Power and Control group (*charity service supporting people with learning disabilities*)
- Elfrida Society Parent Support Group
- Adult Community Learning (*free education courses for adults*)
- Eagle Recovery (*support group for adults in recovery from substance abuse*)
- Outlook (*resource centre for adults with physical disabilities, sight and hearing impairments*)
- Hornsey Lane Estate Community Centre (*community centre for children and adults*)
- Holloway Neighbourhood Group (*community centre for adults*)
- Manor Gardens Welfare Trust x 2 (*charity providing health and wellbeing services*)

Key findings:

There was **substantial variation in what areas were considered most important**, both across groups as well as among participants in the same workshop, who shared a common characteristic (i.e. youth, parents, disability type), who lived in the same neighbourhood or who were receiving services from the same organisation. Of the 10 areas they collectively rated as priorities, the following were the most frequent and ranked highest: crime and safety, housing, and mental health and wellbeing.

In half of the discussions, residents spoke about the **interconnections** across key areas – the influence of ASB, homelessness, unemployment, community activities and green space on mental health, effects of overcrowded housing on education, health and family relationships.

- “I cannot afford to buy a house, neither do I qualify for housing from the council so eventually **I will have to end up moving because rents are too high.**” (Resident, Manor Gardens)
- “There is a long-term impact of experiencing **antisocial behaviour. It reduces you to vulnerability** and a feeling of not being safe in your home.” (Resident, Holloway Neighbourhood Group)
- “**More spaces** for all and **mental health** support. It’s important to support those who are lonely and suffering from mental health, especially after Covid and how much people have gone through.” (Member, Elfrida Power and Control Group)

Participants offered a range of suggestions to reduce inequality including:

- **Improved communication** about activities, benefits and eligibility requirements
- Translating information into other languages and providing access to interpreters
- Improve coordination across council teams, between council and resident groups
- Conduct greater oversight of private landlords, improve tenant protection, create higher standards for housing inspections
- More accessible facilities and events including in hospitals, GPs and shops: easy read signs and menus, accessible seating, maintained disabled toilets



Participatory mapping and walking tours with overcrowded housing tenants

We know that overcrowded accommodation is a significant challenge facing many families in Islington. There is well-developed evidence that overcrowding negatively impacts both mental and physical health. In London, 7% of houses are overcrowded (both in the private rental sector and in socially rented accommodation).¹

We recruited a small number of participants who self-identified as living in overcrowded accommodation, defined as “A home where more than 3 people need to sleep in the same room, or where someone needs to sleep in the living room or another shared space”.

Participatory mapping is a technique that enables people to share experiences related to physical space. Through this process of describing their lives in the borough, 3 residents living in overcrowded housing highlighted the trade-offs they are making in their choice of where to live and how to spend limited financial resources.

Many of the key themes overlap with those in the open survey, including the relationship between housing, safety, community, transportation and the environment.

What makes a good home?

- **Safety:** physical safety, but also cultural security (e.g. safety wearing a head scarf, the relationship between Black youth and police) and access to safe outdoor and community spaces (including play space)
- Good neighbours and a **community** feel – gentrification was generally described as disruptive.
- **Good transport** routes including accessible bus access, cycle routes, step-free pedestrian routes, and well-lit streets
- **Quality and usability of home** was more important than size, but space must be at least adequate.

Choosing where to live

- Islington is seen as a borough with good support services.
- Families are **willing to live in very poor-quality housing within the borough to be able to access Islington services.**
- Social housing is seen as a blessing.
- Access to **community activities** and groups is incredibly important.
- Knife crime makes certain areas unsafe.
- Access to **culture-specific hubs and communities** important for maintaining identity (e.g. Jamaican restaurants; Chinese supermarket).

Housing Affordability

- Families are **making daily choices to make living in Islington affordable.** These include foregoing children’s activities and grocery shopping outside of borough.
- **Private rental is seen as unaffordable** and financially risky.
- There is **no hope of being able to purchase property in Islington.**
- Families in council housing **do not see possibilities for adult children to continue living in-borough** due to cost.
- Good quality private rentals will not accept housing benefit.



Anthropology By Children (ABC)

Children are one of the demographics most affected by inequality and deprivation in Islington. 28% of children under 16 live in low-income households, making Islington the 10th highest for child poverty in the country.

In summer 2022, Dr. Kelly Fagan Robinson, an anthropologist from Cambridge University, developed the ‘Anthropology By Children’ (ABC) pilot for Islington. Over a series of lunchtime clubs, Robinson taught qualitative research methods to year 6 children in five local schools, including state independent sector schools, and schools for children who have Special Educational Needs (SEN). 60% of the children on average across the schools used English as a second language, with an average of 46% of children on free school meals.

Children learned *ethnographic methods – ethnography* literally meaning ‘life charting’ – documenting their experiences using photography, drawing, and writing. As pupils learned and employed these approaches to communicate their experiences inside and outside school, they also learnt how to listen and be listened to, reinforcing the value of their own voices.

The visual mediums the children learned during the ABC clubs encouraged those students less likely to talk in class to present their experiences in visual ways, encouraging them to feel more comfortable presenting in public and taking on leadership roles – not only in class, but on film and live onstage in school assemblies.

Children learnt the following methods:

1. **Proxemic mapping** – looking at space between people to explore relationships and dynamics
2. **Interviewing** – interviewing using personal objects, active listening
3. **Voicing for the other (surrogate voicing)** – listening to somebody else’s story and articulating for them
4. **Photovoice** – using photography and photos to express self and articulate views
5. **Fieldnotes and bias** – taking notes on a situation and understanding how bias impacts people’s interpretation of behaviour and events

Proud Islington – LGBTQ+ Videovoice

As part of our process for scoping which communities we needed to hear from, the Let’s Talk team identified that, nationally, LGBTQ+ people experience a range of inequalities compared to heterosexual people. However, other than hate crime statistics, we lacked data on our local LGBTQ+ community. We therefore decided to ‘deep dive’ with a small cohort, creating space for **open, honest dialogue** in which we could meaningfully explore the nuance of personal experience.

We partnered with London Metropolitan University and local filmmakers, led by Met academic Donna Jones, who coordinated a project which trained nine LGBTQ+ people in documentary filmmaking techniques as a medium to express their local experience of being LGBTQ+. This visual research methodology is called **videovoice**.

Videovoice involves bringing a group of people with lived experience together to reflect upon and document salient issues via the power of film; the approach is part of a wider body of participatory action research (PAR) methods which emphasise community-led research and action.

Due to the sensitivity of sharing each personal lived experience, it was important to create a space where people felt comfortable to listen and share with each other. We didn’t want orchestrated conversations or for participants to feel pressured to speak to an agenda. The videovoice methodology itself, led by London Met, was crucial in facilitating this: the group had ongoing discussions about researcher-participant power dynamics while participants freely explored whatever themes they wanted within their films. Additionally, all those directly involved in the workshops identified as LGBTQ+, creating a safe space wherein everyone felt safe to discuss personal experiences.

Participants were recruited via a short expression of interest form sent out widely to local and London LGBTQ+ organisations, services and activities. We were mindful that gay white men can be overrepresented in LGBTQ+ public representation, so we actively tried to recruit a diverse cohort across ethnicity and gender identity by reaching out

¹ Eastop C., Overcrowding: health implications and possible interventions paper

to groups representing black, minority ethnic, and trans+ people (trans+ refers to trans, gender fluid or non-binary individuals) Over the course of 5 workshops, participants wrote and recorded short films capturing what it is like to be LGBTQ+ in Islington, from the impact of homophobic attacks to an aspirational look at how Islington could be 'the gayest borough in the galaxy'.

Participants stressed that Islington should be a strong, loud voice for LGBTQ+ rights – an 'LGBTQ+ Champion Borough' – as expressed by the following key themes:

Community and Connection

- More opportunities such as Videovoice to continue meaningful, open dialogue with LGBTQ+ communities – safe, welcoming and sober spaces for LGBTQ+ people to reflect, connect with each other, and share information about LGBTQ+ activities and services.

Labels and Definitions

- Ensuring trans, non-binary, gender-fluid and gender-queer people are able to express their gender identity and be addressed by their gender preference in all council communications and administration. At a minimum, this would mean ensuring legal and preferred names are included on all forms and communications.
- Ensuring LGBTQ+ people and lived experiences actively contribute towards decision-making. Ongoing educational programmes around diverse identities and use of pronouns.

Visibility

- Creating physical, central, social and safe spaces for LGBTQ+ people to connect and support each other.
- Increasing the visibility of gender-neutral toilets.
- Increasing the visibility of LGBTQ+ role models within the council.

Celebrating Ageing in Islington

London Metropolitan University researchers ran a project in collaboration with Hornsey Lane Estate Community Association, a community centre in a deprived area of the borough. Researchers worked with eleven older people (aged over 55) through two social lunch-club settings and in personal interviews to share stories of their lives in Islington and experiences interacting with the council. Participants used a personal memento to share their story and had their personal portraits taken.

Trust and a desire for personal interaction were the overarching narratives which underpinned the older people's stories and reflections on interacting with the council.

Community

- For older people, their community is a sacred space in which they can find mutual support, belonging, and solace, to which they attach a strong sense of local identity.
- **Community spaces** (such as local bookshops, hair salons, and parks) were highlighted as crucial hubs for the community, acting as intergenerational meeting points vital for retaining community memory and cohesion.
- **Community centres** were praised for encouraging social cohesion and wellbeing, especially providing a social space for isolated older people. Older people, particularly those who lived alone, appreciated being included in community activities and being listened to in a non-judgmental way. These spaces could be enhanced with improved access to healthcare information and financial advice.
- **Maintaining existing spaces** – there is a sense of some community spaces being left to decline. Although new centres are appreciated, older people are familiar and feel invested in existing spaces and do not want them to be neglected. Some older people felt that regeneration was not allocated fairly.
- More **intergenerational conversations** – older people felt there was a real gap in communication between themselves and young people. Older people could become mentors for young people lacking support systems.

Interaction with the Council

- There is an assumption from the council that people will be able to navigate online systems, but there is no 'human' help to do so for those who cannot. The older people generally felt it was difficult to access resources in an accessible and straightforward way. They wanted to speak with a 'real person', not a system.

This lack of personal interaction from the council has resulted in a feeling of 'distance' and lack of trust.

Growing Up in Islington

Children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and disabilities experience stark inequalities compared to non-SEN children, including in education and access to services. SEN children and their families were adversely affected by COVID-19, with education, mental health and social care services often downgraded.

We recognised that SEN children face particularly significant barriers and that we wanted to platform their voices as part of Let's Talk.

We partnered with Little Angel Theatre, a local puppetry theatre company, to run a creative, fun engagement process with The Bridge Secondary School, a school providing support for children with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities.

Ten pupils aged 11-16 worked with council and Little Angel Theatre staff to explore life in Islington over a series of 6 workshops. The pupils engaged in relaxed participatory conversations about their lives in Islington, which were recorded. Each young person then learned about the art of puppetry, creating their own puppet character and using it to narrate their recorded experiences in a short film.

The young people spoke about a range of topics, many of which mirrored the themes which emerged from the main resident survey:

- **Affordability of housing** and the general **cost of living rising** in the borough – young people reflected on the high costs of rent and the increasing cost of bills for energy and electricity
- **Safety and anti-social behaviour**
- **Environment**—with positive statements about their surroundings, in particular **parks**
- A desire for more **services**, such as **youth clubs**, especially for young people with SEN

"The prices of the houses are very expensive. I think they can encourage people to lower the prices, so people can buy more houses and live in London more."

"It could change a lot. The bills are very high now. The internet cut off a little bit a few weeks ago, but it's fine."

"I would love to see more [youth] clubs and theatres as well."

"There's a few murder[s] happening in Islington."



Carrying on the Conversation

Thank you to the thousands of local people who got involved with Let's Talk Islington, sharing your lived experience of inequality and priorities for the borough's future.

Your voice has directly shaped the development of our Islington Together 2030 Plan, which sets out how we will respond to your needs and priorities over the next decade through our 5 missions:

- **Child-friendly Islington:** By 2030, Islington is a place where all children and young people are rooted in a community where they feel safe, can thrive and are able to be part of and lead change.
- **Fairer Together:** By 2030, everyone in Islington who needs extra help and support can access the right support for them at the right time and in the right place.
- **A Safe Place to Call Home:** By 2030, everyone in Islington has a safe, decent and genuinely affordable place to call home.
- **Community Wealth Building:** By 2030, there is a sustainable, inclusive, and locally-rooted economy in Islington, where wealth is shared fairly and residents and businesses feel they have a stake in their community
- **Greener, Healthier Islington:** By 2030, communities in Islington can access, and enjoy London's greenest, cleanest and healthiest neighbourhoods and are able to live healthy, fulfilling and independent lives.

At the heart of our plans set out in this document is community voice and participation. It is essential that you continue to play a role in the delivery of this plan, providing challenge and sharing lived experiences to steer its way.

We have recently launched a new digital engagement platform called **Let's Talk Islington**, where you can find about all of Islington Council's upcoming engagement events and share your ideas for the borough.

You can also get involved in scrutinising council decisions by attending council meetings, which you can find on our **website**.

In the meantime, if you have any ideas or would like to get involved in any way, please get in touch with us by emailing **engagement@islington.gov.uk**.



**ISLINGTON
TOGETHER**
2030 PLAN