

Challenging Inequality

2023 Annual Scrutiny Report

What we plan to cover





Challenging Inequality Programme

The backdrop

The Challenging Inequality programme was established in 2021 on the back of the Covid 19 Pandemic, the death of George Floyd and the Black Lives Matter movement. It has played a significant role in **shaping our conversations around inequality and embedding our approach to tackling it as part of our core business** across our organisation, partnerships and community.

Since the programme's initiation our society has changed significantly. Recovery of the impacts of Covid 19, the war in Ukraine, the cost-of-living crisis and overall funding reductions across the public sector have introduced new pressures that continue to **impact and create further obstacles for those who are most disadvantaged**.

Our 'Let's Talk Islington' engagement enabled us to better understand the lived experiences of our residents and target intervention at specific issues that exist for different groups. The launch of our **Islington Together 2030 corporate plan** puts tackling inequality at the centre of our mission to deliver a more equal Islington.

The core nature of inequality means that we continually **evolve our approach to respond to new issues and challenges**.

Programme structure



Important steps to overcoming the challenges

Sharing Responsibility for Equality

Work with HR to deliver mandatory statutory equality duty training

Embed equalities training in on-boarding of new staff

Introduce mandatory refresher training to be completed by all staff each year

Equality Action Plans

Use the Equalities Framework for Local Government and Racial Equality Standards to set standards

Work with services to develop clear action plans
Make it compulsory to demonstrate impact and benefits realisation in action plans

Identify subject matter experts and specialists to deliver department specific guidance and training

Leadership

Continue to ensure that Executive Members and Corporate Directors have leading roles in the delivery of priority outcomes

Equalities action planning captured through service planning.
CEO to approve all equalities flagship projects.

Deliver data and impact workshops
Offer equalities innovation funding

Reporting

Refresh reporting arrangements and memberships
Report through corporate performance

Ensure department equalities leaders have appropriate knowledge and accountability for action plans

Embed consistent reporting arrangements to CMB

Communications

Develop a comms strategy that promotes CI activity within the context of the Islington Together 2030 plan

Attend all senior leadership team meetings to share the responsibility of equality across the whole department

Increase opportunities to bring residents together around the CI agenda

Deciding priorities

A long list of priorities were identified through:

- Let's Talk Islington engagement
- Extended 'Being Black in Islington' report
- Ongoing analysis of council data and review of trends
- Complaints and queries
- Feedback from residents more generally
- Other pervasive issues known to be impacting the lives and experiences of residents i.e. cost of living crisis

These different data sources were carefully evaluated to determine a shortlist of priority outcomes that were delivered across the year through the Challenging Inequality action learning approach.

The outcomes framework clearly outlines the different groups that will benefit from action taken through this approach.

Sense of Belonging
Improved trust
Improved Satisfaction
Empowered communities

Warm and Good quality
Housing

Criminal justice

Digital Inclusion
Disparities of income

Black owned business

Education
School Exclusions

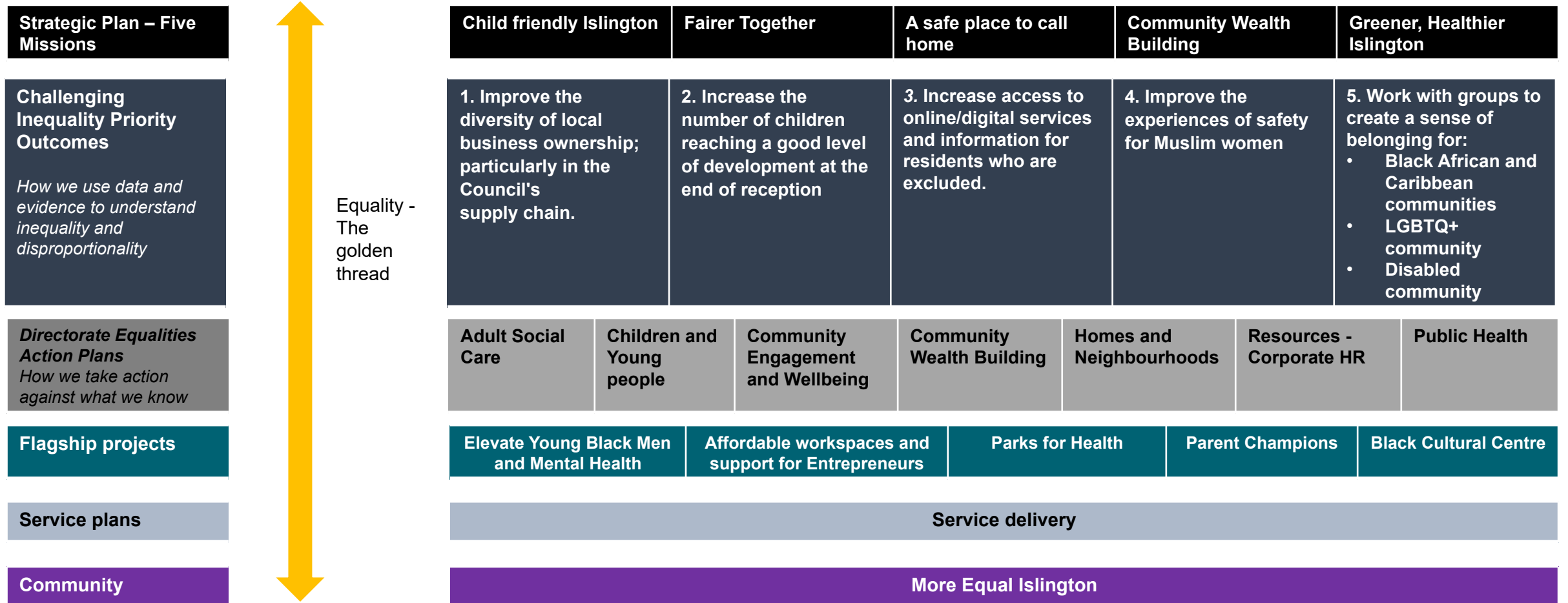
Accessibility of
services/Increased
access to services

Health Inequalities

Warm and Good Quality Housing was strongly considered as a priority area of focus, however it was withdrawn from the short list because work is underway on a **national scale** to ensure that residents can heat their homes and access warm space. Also, providing quality housing is already a baseline priority for the council.

Challenging inequality in the broader corporate context

Tackling inequality is a golden thread that runs through everything we do as a council. We will continue to address inequality through the three workstreams set out in the Challenging Inequality Strategy: **Strategic leader, Employer and Service provider and commissioner** within the broader context of our strategic priorities.



Governance arrangements and actions taken

The framework used to scrutinise, monitor and evaluate the Challenging Inequality equality action plans for each directorate will be carried out through existing programme governance arrangements. The frequency of meetings will consider action learning sessions.

Governance Group	Change from	Change to
Challenging Inequality Programme Board meetings	Monthly meetings	Bi-monthly meetings
Race Equality Working Group	Monthly meetings	Renamed 'Challenging Inequality Councillors Working Group' Meet 6 times a year
Challenging Inequality Coalition	Every eight weeks (6 times a year)	Three times a year
Challenging Inequality Working group	Every eight weeks (6 times a year)	Merge with CI Coalition and meet three times a year.

The team have completed the following steps to implement the action learning approach that oversees the delivery of the framework.

Appoint action learning groups
(*commitment from stakeholders and residents to join action learning sets*)

Confirm subject matter experts and prepare internal data packs for baseline evidence

Finalise schedules and disseminate invitations

Launch 'kick off' meetings with external facilitator

Directorate equality action plans progress

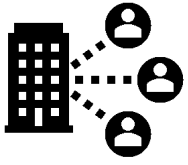
- The Equalities team is working closely with departments and Equality Champions to advise and ensure Action plans are clearly defined with practical actions to be delivering within existing resources.
- The Outcomes Framework Development, work has been carried out on refreshed departmental action plans, led by departments and supported by the Equalities Team.
- Work has started to map the actions against the Challenging Inequality Plan targets and the Islington Together 2030 plan ensuring outcomes are aligned.

Directorate	Progress
Adult Social Care	Reviewed by C.I team, scrutinised by residents through peer review.
Children's Services	Reviewed by C.I team
Community Wealth-building	Reviewed by C.I team
Environment	Reviewed by CI team
Homes & Neighbourhoods	Updated version recently reviewed by C.I team
Public Health	Under review
Resources	Reviewed by CI team



Challenging Inequality Priority Outcomes

Overview: Challenging inequality priority outcomes



1. **Improve the diversity of local business ownership**; particularly in the Council's supply chain



2. **Increase the number of children** reaching a good level of development at the end of reception from **Black Caribbean, Turkish Cypriot and mixed White and Black Caribbean backgrounds**, to catch up and keep up with all Islington pupils



3. **Increase access to online/digital services** and information for residents who are **excluded**



4. Improve experiences of **community safety for Muslim women**

5. **Work with focus groups to deliver actions that promote a sense of belonging:**

- Black African and Caribbean communities
 - LGBTQ+ community
- Residents with a disability

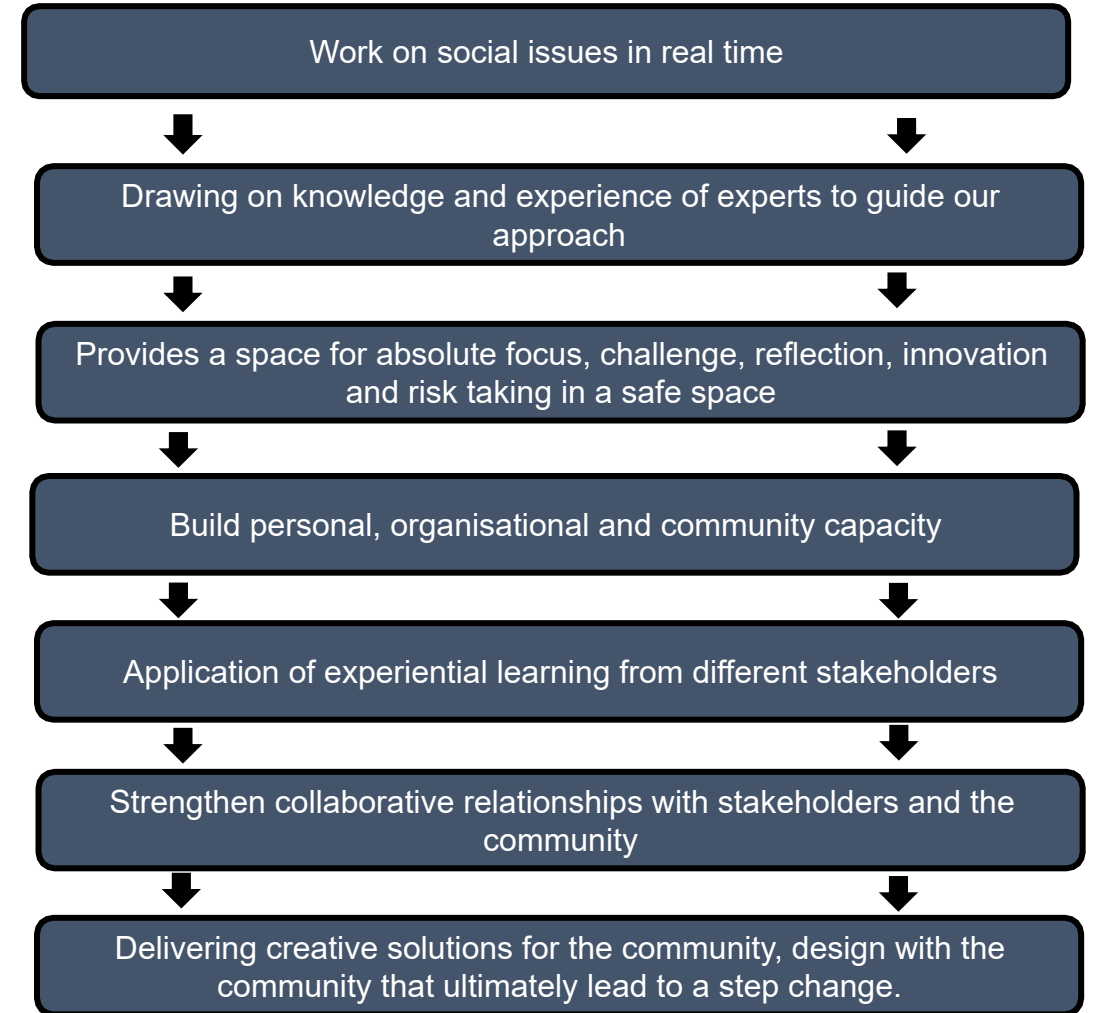


Using action learning to challenge inequality

The purpose of our action learning approach



How action learning will make a difference



The framework and schedule for action learning

Outcome	Early Measures	Corporate Director	Executive Member	Stakeholder groups	Sessions
1. Improve the diversity of local business ownership ; particularly in the Council's supply chain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of disabled residents supported into work Number of Black, Asian and other minoritised ethnic groups supported into work Begin capturing equalities data for SMEs and local business Undertake mapping to understand how many local business supply the council 	Stephen Biggs	Cllr Santiago Bell-Bradford	External – Anchor institutions, employers and local business, entrepreneurs MSDUK Ethnic Minority Businesses	[Commissioned external provider]
2. Increase the number of children reaching a good level of development at the end of reception from Black Caribbean, Turkish Cypriot and mixed White and Black Caribbean backgrounds , to catch up and keep up with all Islington pupils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take up of early education entitlements Early years foundation stage profile Achieving the milestones set out in the education plan 	Jon Abbey	Cllr Michelline Safi Ngongo	Parent Champions Bright Start Family practitioners School practitioners	June 2023 September 2023 TBC TBC
3. Increase access to online/digital services and information for residents who are excluded	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An increase in the number of residents who have access to digital resources i.e. computer's, tablets and or Wi-Fi An increase in the number of residents who are digitally literate and able to access online content 	Raj Chand	Cllr Una O'Halloran Cllr Diarmaid Ward	Pensioners Forum, Octopus Community Networks, Healthwatch, British Academy, Age UK, Choices, Citizens Advice	July 2023 TBC TBC TBC
4. Improve experiences of community safety for Muslim women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capture early experiences and views of safety through ongoing case studies and regular surveys. 	Jed Young	Cllr John Woolf	Islington Faith's Forum, Muslim Welfare House, London Met Police, Finsbury Park Mosque	September 2023 January 2024 April 2024 September 2024
5. Work with focus groups from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Black African and Caribbean communities LGBTQ+ community Residents with a disability To deliver actions that promote a sense of belonging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capture experiences/accounts of 'belonging' from 'pilot' groups Monitor shift in attitude over time Record feedback and testimonials 	Raj Chand	Cllr Roulin Khondoker Cllr Rowena Champion Cllr Nurullah Turan	Forum+, Islington Mind/Outcome, London Met Archives, Brickworks Community Centre, Go Africa, BCC engagement group, Disability Action Islington	October 2023 February 2024 June 2024 October 2024

Delivery updates

Outcomes	
Outcome 1 <i>Improving the diversity of local businesses ownership, particularly in the council's supply chain</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Commissioned MSDUK – the nation's leading supplier diversity organisation• Calls booked with City & Westminster (long-term members) to discuss their experience and best practice• Working to identify potential local suppliers and next steps with our account manager
Outcome 2 <i>Increasing the number of children reaching a good level of development at the end of reception</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1st Action Learning Set - Friday 16 June (representation from partners, practitioners and parent champions) Proposed actions: <i>Diversify leadership in schools, nurseries and early years, understand, map and reach our community stakeholders, perinatal and postnatal support and parenting programmes that reflect the local community</i>• 2nd Action Learning Set – Thursday 28 September. Children's team identified significant existing work across proposed actions and potential for duplication. Currently working with Children's services to potentially pivot and identify more appropriate gap and target for outcome.
Outcome 3 <i>Increase access to online/digital services and information for residents who are excluded</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1st Action Learning Set – Friday 4 July (included British Academy and Digital Poverty experts)• Improvement to be made on community representation• 3 areas of work identified: <i>Connectivity, Devices, Skills & Confidence</i>• Transformation team leading on extensive mapping of Islington's digital offer• Next workshop date paused due to staff changes
Outcome 4 <i>Improving experiences of community safety for Muslim women</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1st Action Learning Set – Wednesday 13 September at Finsbury Park Mosque• Great attendance and representation of Muslim women• Highly positive feedback of event with tangible actions proposed by participants including: <i>Women-only swimming sessions, advocate in all Islington Mosques, support for 3rd party reporting</i>• Great support from Community Safety team to work on taking actions forward• Second workshop planned for Thursday 25 January 24
Outcome 5 <i>Work with focus groups from: Black African and Caribbean communities LGBTQ+ community, residents with a disability, to deliver actions that promote a sense of belonging</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1st Action Learning Set – 12 October 2023• Positive feedback from attendees, though improvement to be made to engage wider audience. Tangible actions proposed will be sense-checked at engagement events for respective community groups• Increased partnership with London Metropolitan Archives• Next workshop planned for 8th February 2024

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Participant feedback

“The three discussion sessions felt very relevant and concise. There was enough time to discuss everything and it didn't feel like we were being asked questions just for the sake of it. I think it was extremely well managed and run. And it ended on time!”

Participant that attended outcome four workshop

Evaluating the priority outcomes

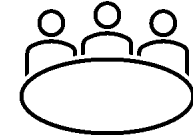
The first workshop for each outcome ends by drafting an initial action plan whereby participants identify practical solutions



In-between sessions, the Challenging Inequality team work with relevant departments to identify existing work in each area, while spotting any gaps



Session two looks to solidify an action plan, considering existing work and gaps, as participants mutually agree tangible steps and measures for success.





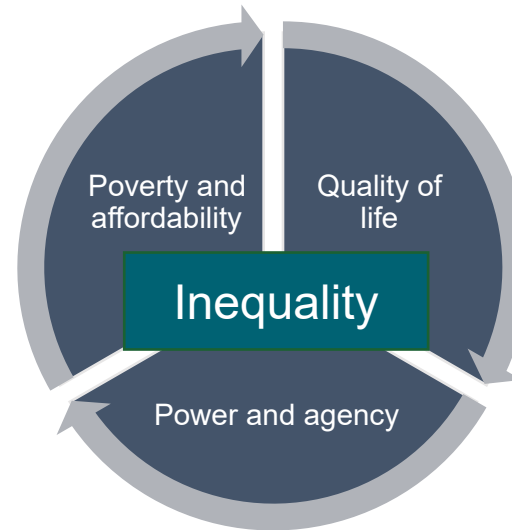
Equality Events

Equality events and learning calendar 2023

Every year Islington deliver a calendar of equality events that aim to **provide learning and opportunities to celebrate the diversity and rich culture** that exists in our borough. The calendar represents a programme of events, which aim to promote an inclusive, fair and equal society.

It enables the delivery team to forward plan and commission or create a series of activities that actively respond to our **Islington Together 2030 plan**; to create more equal futures for Islington residents. We aim to mark significant events, which represent Islington's diverse resident population. Examples of these events include Holocaust Memorial Day, International Women's Day, Refugee Week, and Islamophobia Awareness Month.

This section provides an overview of the types of events that we celebrate and why.



All events align with the following three key objectives that have been identified through the cycle of inequality.

1.

Provide education, raise awareness around issues and sign post services

2.

Celebrate culture, diversity, heritage and inclusion

3.

Create opportunities for community cohesion and togetherness

Our equality events and learning offer 2023

Islington goes beyond its duty of care to meet and exceed the equality duty set out under the Equality Act 2010. The events' programme delivered by the team reflects our commitment to promoting a fair and more equal society. It is also a response to the insights we have about the inequalities that exist within Islington.

Event	Our insights	Attendees
Holocaust Memorial Day & Education Day 2023	0.9% of Islington's population is Jewish. The event aimed to commemorate the millions of people murdered in the holocaust, and the genocides that occurred thereafter.	171
We Are Islington Festival	Islington is the 5th most deprived borough in London. The festival was a response to coming out of Covid, the cost of living crisis and increasing community cohesion.	Approx. 120
Black History Islington 2023	Councillors shared that a year round Black History offer is the way forward. 12.8% of Islington's population identify as black. We know that Black African and Caribbean communities desire an increase in their sense of belonging, these events contribute to this.	187 (not including the fitness classes)
UK Disability History 2023 <i>(All year round offer)</i>	14% of Islington residents have a disability. This year's programme aimed to break down systemic barriers and raise awareness of the lived experience of our blind and disabled residents.	TBC

This year our approach aimed to build relationships with stakeholders and residents to foster trust and understanding that led us to create events that centre our residents, resulting in increased engagement and repeat participation.

As an example; we have begun to forge alliances with Islington's voluntary and community organisations that work with blind and disabled residents to better understand what the council can be doing for them. We hosted the Social Model of Disability workshop, which helped to recognise the barriers that make life more difficult for them

Here are some examples of events that make up the 2023 event calendar.



Equality event's programme for Autumn 2023

Black History Islington

Our celebration of Black History is not limited to one month, we recognise and celebrate the contributions of our Black community all year round through our Black History Islington offer. This year the launch theme for Black History is 'Saluting Our Sisters', which recognises that Britain's rich cultural tapestry is interwoven with the threads of remarkable black women. The launch of the programme included fitness classes, local history walks and talks.



An article in the Islington Tribune covering a Black History Walk's tour in October 23, which formed part of the launch event programme.

Resident feedback

'I write to thank you for putting on this Black History Event at the Jean Stoke Community Centre last week. It was good to learn and celebrate the good works of women in our Community. I am particularly interested to learn more about the project to resurrect/commemorate 'Black Mary Mineral Springs' in Clerkenwell Islington in 2024'

Resident who attended a Black History Islington event 2023

Equality Events in 2024

Day of week	Date	Month	Occasion/Event
Friday	1/26/2024	January	Holocaust Memorial Day
tbc	tbc	January	Holocaust Education Day
Friday	3/8/2024	March	International Women's Day
Sunday	6/16/2024	June	Refugee Week
Saturday	6/22/2024	June	Windrush Day
Friday	11/1/2024	November	Islamophobia Awareness Month
Saturday	11/16/2024	November	UK Disability History Month
		All year round	Black History Islington



Black Cultural Centre

The council vision for the centre

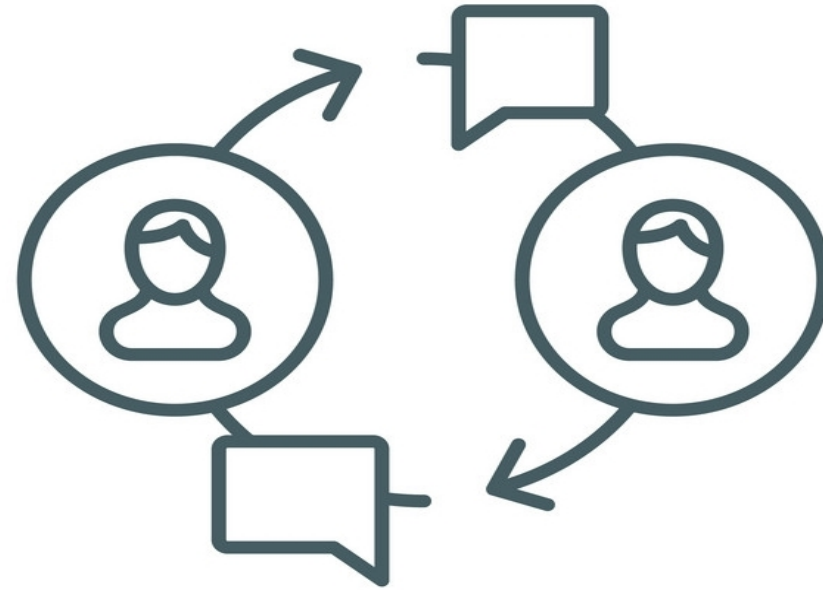
Create a space that primarily unites residents from Black African and Caribbean backgrounds and is inclusive to all ethnic groups

Provide a safe environment that allows groups to come together to address issues that impact the community disproportionately

Provide opportunities for education and provide positive representation of Black history, Black icons, art, culture and heritage

Empower marginalised groups and create a sense of connection and belonging to the borough

Sign post services and opportunities that can support marginalised groups



COMMUNITY

Demonstrate Islington's commitment and dedication to supporting and empowering marginalised groups

Develop and nurture budding entrepreneurs and new community organisations

Provide health (*mental and physical*) and wellbeing services including holistic and therapeutic support in response to trauma and abuse

The Black Cultural Centre

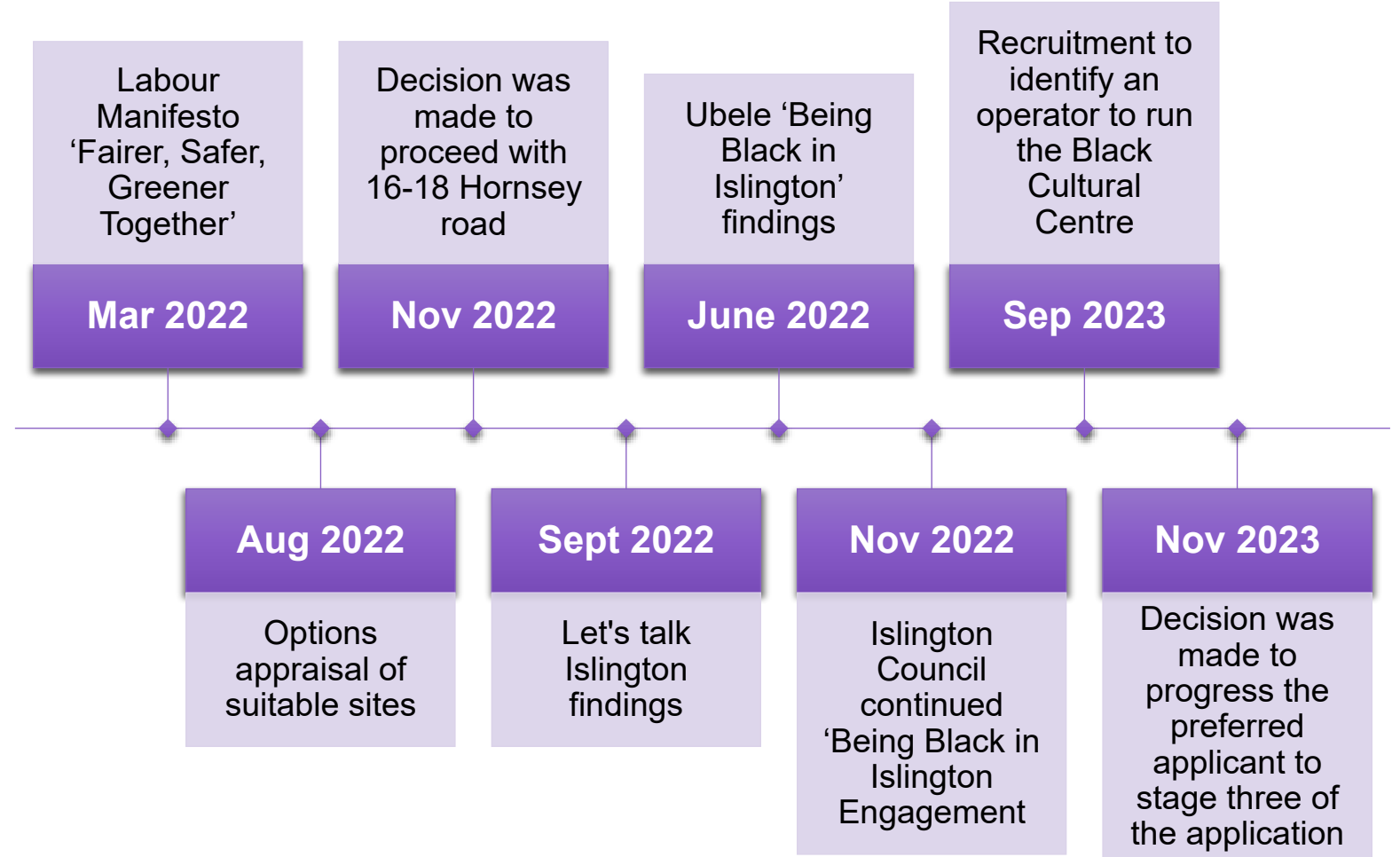
16-18 Horney Road - Refurbishment works are progressing



Black Cultural Centre

In 2021-2022 we rolled out our Let's Talk Islington borough wide engagement to better understand residents lived experiences.

Understanding that residents of African and Caribbean heritage reported more complex accounts of inequality, we commissioned the Ubele Initiative to carry out more in-depth researching with the Black community to understand the experiences of being Black in Islington.



Next steps

December 2023

- Panel review submission of stage three of the application process

January 2024

- Recommendations from Panel reviewed by CEW DMT & CMB
- Completion of Capital works
- Grant the lease to preferred operator
- Handover to the preferred operator

February 2024

- Grand Opening of the Black Cultural Centre

ANY QUESTIONS?