



Providing the services
you care about

Highgate Newtown Community Centre

Strategic Plan 2016-2019

1. Introduction

For over 40 years, Highgate Newtown Community Centre (HNCC) has been a valued and well-used resource for the diverse communities living in and around London Borough of Camden. As a community hub, the Centre provides over 25 different activities and services aimed at improving the overall quality of life of local residents. Through its work, HNCC supports residents to overcome economic, health and social disadvantage whilst addressing the more specific developmental and well-being needs of Young People and Over 60s.

This Strategic Plan presents the HNCC's, outcomes and strategic direction for the next 3 years. It outlines local community needs and makes recommendations for building the organisation's capacity to deliver high quality services in the current economic environment. This Plan is written at a time of change and transition for many Community and Voluntary Sector organisations which are under increasing pressure to rethink their primary income sources and manage new and more complex funder requirements. The challenge for HNCC will be to enact effective strategies to adapt to this new environment, whilst continuing to prioritise the needs and overall well-being of the communities it serves.

This plan is ambitious but achievable and will require an enlarged pool of volunteers who will need the training, on-going support and co-ordination to allow them to take on a broader range of roles. The progressive withdrawal of core funding means that the Centre needs to secure funds for rent and to meet its running costs of the as well as raising funds to provide services.

Strategic Aims This Plan has identified the following strategic aims of HNCC activities for local communities living in Highgate Newtown, Archway, Tufnell Park and Dartmouth Park neighbourhoods:

- To improve the health and well-being of older people
 - To enable children and young people to develop social and practical skills
 - To alleviate poverty and economic hardship within the local community
 - To increase economic and social cohesion within the local community
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2. Emerging Needs and Priorities

Local Challenges

The Centre is strongly committed to developing an understanding of local community needs and using the findings to shape the design and implementation of services. In doing so, Camden's Neighbourhood Profiles were analysed for three immediate areas which benefit from the Centre, and they highlighted the following specific challenges:

Dartmouth Park:

- Ageing population: over 65s make up 14.5% of population (Camden: 10.9%)
- Jobs per capita of working age residents: 0.2 jobs (Camden: 2.1 jobs per capita)
- Working age residents in receipt of ESA and Incapacity benefits: 10.5% (Camden: 6.4%)
- Total working age adults in receipt of out of work benefits: 15.7% (Camden: 9.3%)
- Public transport accessibility level score of 4.1 out of 8 (Camden 5.6)
- Multiple Deprivation: 3 LSOA (lower super output areas)¹ that fall within 10% most deprived in England, including income deprivation, living environment deprivation and income deprivation affecting children

Highgate Hill:

- Extremely low population density: 10.9 people per hectare (Camden: 105.4pph)
- Ageing population: 27.2% are over 65 years of age (Camden: 10.9%)
- Jobs per capita: 0.5 jobs per working age resident (Camden: 2.1 jobs per capita)
- Overweight adults: 31% (Camden 26%)
- Public transport accessibility level score of 2.8 out of a possible 8 (Camden: 5.6)
- Fuel poverty: 10.7% of households (Camden: 8.8%)
- Carers that provide 1-19 hours of care: 80% (Camden: 66.7%)
- Use of accessible transport: 25.7% (Camden: 16.3%)

¹ A lower super output area is a geography for the collection and publication of small area statistics. It has an average of roughly 1,500 residents and 650 households

- Use of a blue badge: 31.1% of eligible residents (Camden: 19.1%)
- Registration with Early Years: 40.9% of under 5s (Camden: 79%)

Parliament Hill and Heath:

- Ageing population: over 65s make up 14.8% of population (Camden: 10.9%)
- Jobs per capita of working age residents: 0.5 jobs (Camden: 2.1 jobs per capita)
- Limited child care at 0.02 places per child under 5 (Camden: 0.27 places)
- Diagnosis of either anxiety or depression 18% (Camden: 15%)
- Public transport accessibility level score of 3.9 out of 8 (Camden 5.6)
- 30.1% of under 5s are not registered with Early Years (Camden: 21%)

In addition to local data, a series of steps were taken to assess the needs of local residents, including a 1-week snapshot survey of user data, interviews with project staff for Chain Reaction, Under-5s services, Older People’s Fitness, the Artist in Residency, woodwork and the centre psychotherapist. These were supplemented by a series of discussions with the centre Director, as well as several service users. This enabled HNCC to examine the levels and type of support required by the local community. Below are the thematic considerations that have shaped HNCC’s strategic service priorities for 2016-2019.

Poverty and Economic Hardship

Income Deprivation is an element that cuts across all primary user groups at HNCC. Nationally, low and middle income families are feeling a squeeze, with frozen salaries and cuts in benefits, which are disproportionate to cost of living and inflation. The full extent of the impact of welfare reform is yet to be seen, in particular, the effects of universal credit on lone mothers who are likely to be £1000 worse off each year (Institute for Fiscal Studies, 2016). Households are facing increased debt and poverty. This inevitably has an impact on the family and an impact on mental health and wellbeing. The increasing demand on public services is faced with cuts across local authorities and voluntary sector funding, and people facing hardship experience difficulties in accessing much needed services.

The contrast of poverty and wealth in surrounding neighbourhoods is very visible, with social housing and estates bordering on large privately owned homes worth several million. On a larger scale, this disparity disguises the extent of hardship and poverty, which is only measurable by drilling down to super output areas. Although none of Highgate ward falls within the most deprived areas nationally, the super output area that HNCC is located in falls within the

20% - 30% most deprived areas nationally.

As described above, Dartmouth Park has three LSOAs that fall within 10% most deprived in England, including income deprivation, living environment deprivation and income deprivation affecting children. 15.7% of the working age population is in receipt of out of work benefits. Additionally, 10.5% of working age residents are in receipt of ESA and Incapacity benefits.

A mapping exercise has shown that there are a number of social housing blocks and estates in the area, where the deprivation appears to be localised, including Highgate Newtown Estate, Dartmouth Park Hill Estate, Whittington Estate and Holly Lodge Estate.

Welfare reform is impacting on a number of families in the area that HNCC serves, with Housing Benefit claimants making up around a third of households in Camden. Highgate ward has a high number of tenants (100-200) who are under-occupying by 1 bedroom, for which the average loss in benefits is £16.47/week. 21% of current Housing Benefit claimants have already been affected by the changes to Housing Benefit (by the LHA changes or Social Sector Size Criteria) or will be affected by the Total Benefit Cap in the coming months.

Under-fives

On the whole, the under-fives accessing HNCC services appear to fare better than the borough average in areas such as child poverty, access to childcare, as well as parental and family life chances (Neighbourhood Profiles, 2015). Levels of child poverty, registrations with Early Years services and lone parent credits receipts are significantly lower across HNCC's primary user neighbourhoods when compared to the Camden average. In Dartmouth Park, the number of childcare places available per child under-five is close to double the borough average and parents of working age are less affected by income inequality and long-term illness (Camden Equality Taskforce Evidence Base, 2013).

However, upon a deeper assessment of the data for Dartmouth Park, it becomes clear that income deprivation affecting children in one LSOA falls within 10% most deprived in England, whilst another LSOA falls within 30% most deprived. Similarly, one LSOA in Parliament Hill and Health falls within 20% most deprived in England. Dartmouth Park also has a slightly higher prevalence of lone parent families, with 7.4% compared with 6.4% in Camden, and the higher concentration being in LSOAs with higher levels of income deprivation. This makes a pressing case for the need for affordable under-5s services, which are accessible for low income families with young children who live locally.

Interviews conducted with HNCC staff also suggest that when attending activities, under-5s from higher income families are more likely to be accompanied by a

childminder, au pair or nanny. Data from consultations with HNCC service users suggests that feelings of isolation and the lack of a supportive familial network are affecting the mental and emotional state of new parents and these carer groups and consequently, the emotional and developmental progress of the children they care for.

Children and Young People (5-18 years)

In 2015, the majority of young people accessing activities and services were under 12 years-old. This is in part due to the relatively young age of Highgate's population, in which over 23% of young people are under 16 (compared to the 21% Camden average). Camden and Islington report on low levels of physical activity for this age group, which makes the need for engaging and accessible activities more important for this age group.

Recent findings suggest that the 16-24 year-old age group is struggling with poor educational attainment and a high risk of becoming NEET, with Camden and Islington holding the fourth and the second highest NEET rates in London respectively (ONS, 2015). This particular age group is affected by the same levels of income deprivation and are just as likely to be from lone income families, as the younger age group. Data from the IMD show that there is low employment for young people. Many young people lack the life and employment skills that will enable them to take up training or work opportunities. The experience of receiving out of work benefits, as well as the lack of life and employment skills makes this group particularly vulnerable to substance misuse, youth offending, as well as mental ill-health.

There are few opportunities for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to mix with young people from more affluent homes, which can create tensions in the area.

Older People

Older People have been a priority service group for HNCC, making up a historic service user group of the centre. HNCC's neighbourhood communities have disproportionately higher ageing populations, with a 39% increase in 60-74 year-olds from 2001-2011. In particular Highgate Hill at 27% has almost three times the percentage of residents aged over 60 compared to the Camden average.

The age make-up of the local area has continued to result in specific health and well-being needs in neighbourhoods such as Dartmouth Park, where there is a probability of loneliness for 20-30% of the total population, as well as higher levels of physical disability and mobility-related difficulties. Poor transport links in this area increase the social and physical isolation of many older people, who are limited to their own neighbourhoods. Meeting the needs of this group is, therefore, particularly challenging as the Highgate area has a lack of locally

accessible services for older people compared to elsewhere in Camden.

Income deprivation affecting older people in two of Dartmouth Park's LSOAs falls within 20% and 30% most deprived in England, whilst another LSOA falls within 30% most deprived. In Parliament Hill, income deprivation for this age group in one LSOA falls within 20% most deprived in England.

3. Responding to Local Needs

A Local Response

The research and analysis presented above demonstrates the need for a localised response to what are essentially local challenges. Over a period of time, HNCC has provided such a response through its community presence and its understanding of local need. The Centre has demonstrated its role as a valuable and widely-accessed community resource. HNCC's current activities (refer to Appendix 1) are aimed at individuals and families of different ages and socio-economic backgrounds and they promote social cohesion across different sections of the community.

However, in order to achieve the strategic aims outlined in this plan, HNCC must think beyond its current activities. This section builds on the needs identified above, and develops a rationalised approach to developing new services.

Under-fives

The low take-up of under 5s services in the local area has been a particular problem in the last few years, as many local services for under 5s have reduced their provision or closed entirely. The few services that remain must charge a fee to ensure their sustainability. Consequently, a number of low income families find that they are unable to take up services as they are unable to afford the costs. Many of these children will have limited space at home to play, a lack of access to educational toys and there may not be the household income to buy healthy food. This creates a clear case for services to be available at little or no cost.

Additionally, parents and carers have expressed a need for training and services that enable them to develop parenting skills, but also help them socialise with those in similar predicaments to themselves. This will not only help reduce isolation and increase support structures, but will help increase their knowledge and skills around children's development needs.

HNCC aims to provide a broad range of services for under-fives and their parents or carers, which would include:

- Drop in services and supervised play including opportunities to sing, dance, listen and make things
 - Gym, dance and football sessions
 - Baby clothes exchange
 - Food parcels
 - New parent and baby sessions, including support with breastfeeding
 - Links to other Children's Services, including health services
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Children and Young People (5-18 years)

Many local young people currently have limited opportunities and few places to go to. This is allied with low aspirations and attainment. There economic disparity between young people growing up in the same neighbourhood is vast, and there are few natural opportunities for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to mix with young people from more affluent homes. The divide can create tensions in the area. Therefore, there is not only a clear need for activities that appeal to children from different backgrounds, but that allow them to participate on a level playing field.

Additionally, there is a need to develop services and activities that help to overcome the low levels aspiration and educational attainment amongst young men and boys from the white working class demographic, and engage them in developing new skills and knowledge.

A range of services will be developed for young people that would include:

- Sports opportunities i.e. two-touch football run by local young people to improve job prospects and employment skills. This also allows young people from across the community to come together. Sports teams based at HNCC but competing at other venues would increase pride in both the local community and HNCC.
- Woodwork and other practical activities to increase confidence, skills and employability
- A broad arts programme including outreach to local schools
- Opportunities for volunteering and working at HNCC and partner agencies

Older People

This area has a significantly higher proportion of older people than the Camden average and this includes a larger number of older people with disabilities and mobility problems, and older people living alone. Older people need practical support and opportunities to socialise, particularly for those who are isolated and those with dementia and their carers. Although the Centre's current provision for older residents is based on a clear understanding of the links between old age, risk of isolation, as well as physical ill-health, HNCC should explore the needs of women over 60, in light of the borough's ageing population and predominance of female service users at HNCC.

HNCC has committed, through its Strategic Plan, to develop a range of services for older people. These include

- The Neighbourhood Care Scheme - bulb changing, curtain washing
- A Dementia Café
- A community café serving nutritious, cheap meals

- Subsidised laundry services to encourage good hygiene
 - Activities such as exercise classes and aimed specifically at older people to help them maintain mobility and stay healthy
 - Volunteering opportunities for older people at HNCC and partner agencies
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Cross Cutting Themes

In the development of this strategic plan, it has become evident that there are several cross cutting themes, which interface with all aspects of the Centre’s work: Increasing Community Cohesion, Reducing the Impact of Income Inequality and Reducing Social Isolation. Therefore, HNCC will ensure that these themes are considered and applied across all its activities and services.

In doing so, HNCC is committed to ensuring that activities remain free of charge so that the most in need are able to benefit. This will also ensure community cohesion as people from all sections of the community will be able to interact and socialise.

3. Outcomes Framework

Specific Aims	Outcomes	Outcome Indicators	Information Collection Methods	When and By Whom
To improve the health and wellbeing of older people	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reduced loneliness and social isolation for older people 2. Better nutrition, mobility and health 	<p>% of people feeling less lonely and isolated</p> <p>% of people reporting improvement in nutrition, mobility and health</p>	<p>HNCC Monitoring Form</p> <p>Snapshot survey /Evaluation</p>	<p>All users and new enrolment, by staff or volunteer</p> <p>Quarterly, by staff</p>
To enable children and young people to develop social and practical skills (Under-5s)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reduced loneliness and social isolation for parents and carers 2. Increased social development and learning 	<p>% of people feeling less lonely and isolated</p> <p>% of children demonstrating increase social development and learning</p>	<p>Case Study</p>	<p>Quarterly, by staff</p>
To enable children and young people to develop social and practical skills (Young people)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Young people will be more engaged with their peers and other users at HNCC 2. Increased aspirations through new skills and experiences 	<p>% young people feeling more engaged with their peers</p> <p>% young people reporting increased aspirations</p>		
To reduce income inequality and hardship in the local community	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. People facing hardship will improve their financial or personal circumstances due by taking up centre services and activities 	<p>% people reporting an improvement in their personal circumstances</p>		
To increase the levels of social and economic cohesion among community members	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increased community cohesion through participation in social activities with other members of the community 	<p>% people reporting increased participation in social activities</p>		

4. Moving Forwards – Building Organisational Capacity

Strategic Fundraising

The worsening economic climate has led to the progressive withdrawal of core funding for Community Centres across London, with Camden's central government funding for services being cut by as much as 30% since 2011/2012. Further cuts will be implemented in 2016/2017. For charities such as HNCC, the reliance on commercial income has increased dramatically relative to other sources, including the use of program service fees, as well as contract-based delivery. Furthermore, national cuts in public spending have led Camden Council to make reductions to Adult Social Care and Children's services, resulting in further unmet demand among HNCC's primary user groups. In this context, HNCC should reflect on the following:

- The benefits and challenges involved in diversifying HNCC activities and support services
- The feasibility of extending free services to wards in neighbouring Islington and Haringey boroughs.
- The potential for diversifying income, including the exploration of commercial revenue strategies and maximising the impact of private donations.

Broadening Geographical Reach

Until recently, the constraints within Camden funding and commissioning had not allowed HNCC to significantly expand its focus beyond the borough of Camden, despite the 40% of users who were residents in neighbouring Islington and Haringey. Borough-based funding has required HNCC to monitor beneficiaries largely by postcodes, leading to the exclusion of certain user groups from being needs assessed or from accessing ring-fenced services. Continued efforts must be made to track the borough residency of users and ensure that the Fundraising Strategy takes the full geographical reach of HNCC's services into account.

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)

Traditionally, HNCC's reliance on Local Authority funding, as well as corporate sponsorship and private donations have not required the Centre to adopt an integrated Monitoring and Evaluation strategy. Furthermore, staff time and other financial constraints have made considerations in the area unfeasible. Organisational capacity remains limited in the following key spheres:

1. **Service Monitoring.** The monitoring of the provision and implementation of activities and services in a systematic and standardised way.
2. **Evaluation.** The creation of a tested outcomes framework, with

appropriate indicators and measurement tools.

- 3. Using the results.** A structured system through which to reflect on M&E findings, construct recommendations to make strategic organisational and fundraising plans and finally, be accountable to all HNCC stakeholder groups.

In Camden, there has been a clear move towards an 'outcomes based' approach in which the LA decides on key output areas and allocates funding accordingly. This adds to an already aggressively competitive funding environment, by placing significant demands on centres such as HNCC to prove that they are meeting set outcomes. In order to develop and sustain a lasting commitment to M&E and Impact Measurement, HNCC would require the following:

1. Monitoring and evaluation training for staff and volunteers.
2. Evaluation support that is built into core of project funding.
3. A commitment from governance structures to embed an M&E culture within the organisation.
4. Changes to contracts for room hire to ensure that tenants are required to provide basic monitoring and evaluation data

Partnership and Collaboration

With increasing competition for reduced resources, there is a greater need for HNCC focus on building new relationships within the sector and with businesses, and undertake meaningful partnership work.

HNCC works in partnership with other community centres, churches, primary schools and libraries. Currently, HNCC is working closely with:

- Holly Lodge Community Centre
 - St Anne's Church, Hampstead
 - United Reform Church
 - Highgate Literary Society
 - Islington Council
 - City of London
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Appendix 1. Core Areas of Work and Activities

Food Poverty and Economic Hardship

The following services aim to alleviate the difficult economic situations of users who appear to be increasingly at risk of income deprivation and food poverty:

1. Millie's Cafe

This is a daily cafe' run by a volunteer team at subsidised rates. From Tuesday-Friday throughout the year, anyone from the local community can access a healthy two-course meal for £2. The kitchen is also available to a range of groups who can use it to cook for events free of charge.

2. Food for Thought Food Bank

As a member of Food Share, HNCC receives free food to provide daily low cost meals and emergency food parcels. We take referrals from local agencies and users, to ensure that food reaches the people who need it most in the local area, including to local Camden Council hostels.

Physical and Mental Well-being

The following services are aimed at improving the physical and mental well-being of individuals, by encouraging the take up of creative, healthy and social opportunities:

- Art life class
 - Ceramic circle
 - Sewing skills
 - Sports and Well-being
 - Aerial days Circus School
 - Iyengar yoga
 - Basketball
 - Women's football
 - Body Psychotherapy
 - Biodynamic Massage
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Children and Young People

HNCC has developed the following activities for Children and Young people, to address their learning and developmental needs by improving emotional, social and practical skills.

- Drop-in services and supervised play sessions, including opportunities

to sing, dance, listen and make things for under-fives.

- Gym, dance and football sessions for under-12s.
- A Baby clothes exchange service for under-fives.
- Parent and baby sessions, including support with breastfeeding.
- Links to other Children's Services, including SENDIASS who support 16-24 year-olds with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Disabilities.
- Sports opportunities such as two-touch football run by local young people.
- Woodwork and other practical activities for 5-18 year-olds.

**Older People
(60+)**

The following activities aim to improve the health and well-being of over 60s, by addressing the longer-term social, emotional and physical health needs linked to the local ageing population:

- Ceramic Circle
 - Circuit training
 - Circle dancing
 - Wheelchair based exercises
 - Arts and crafts
 - Chi Kung
-