



People's Health Trust Annual Review 2023

“You see people change and that’s very powerful. One woman told us she felt like she’d lost herself, but being with the group and chatting made her feel less lonely and it really has helped her mental health.”

Carole Miles, Project Lead, Eloquent Fold

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Health inequalities

Our impact

Since 2011, we have supported over 3,500 projects and reached more than 653,000 people across England, Scotland and Wales through £129 million of funding. This has been made possible by players of The Health Lottery.

What all these projects have in common is working towards our ultimate goal of improving the building blocks of health which include social connections, jobs and income, our homes and our environment. Our funded partners address these vital building blocks with our funding, from improving their local environment and access to food through community gardens and allotments, to providing people with skills for employment, and influencing local authorities to improve conditions in people's homes. Many of our funded partners are also working with people who experience worse health inequalities due to barriers in society, discrimination and structural racism, which are also critical factors in determining whether we can live a long and healthy life.

Our grants programmes are targeted at communities experiencing the worst health inequalities and who are often overlooked. More than half a million people have directly benefitted from our funding and support, and we know that the work of our funded partners is having a significant impact. Their stories in this annual review give just some examples of how health and wellbeing can improve at an individual and community level.

The independent evaluations of our funded programmes add to the evidence that our approach works. The evaluation of our Local Conversations long term funding programme found that Local Conversations residents are more satisfied with life, less anxious, and more likely to feel that the things they do in life are worthwhile, compared to averages for similarly disadvantaged areas in Britain.

We know that to tackle health inequalities, we need to address the root causes as well as the symptoms and that this needs to be done at the local, regional and national level.

Supporting what we know from our funded partners on how they are successfully influencing locally, the latest research into the impact of our programmes adds to the evidence base on what engaged communities can achieve to influence policy. 57% of participants from both programmes believe they can influence decisions locally, compared to 22% in similarly disadvantaged neighbourhoods across Britain.¹ And almost eight in ten Local Conversations practitioners report increasing their influence over neighbourhood services.² As well as the clear benefits equitable policy change brings to whole communities, the building of community power benefits both the physical and mental health of those involved.

At the regional and national level, we are influencing change through our partnership work (see page 14).

¹ People's Health Trust and New Economics Foundation, Local Conversations Evaluation, 2021.

² Social Life, Assessing the impact of People's Health Trust's programmes: Wave 3, 2023.

80% of participants said they believe they can change the way their area is run, compared to 51% in similarly disadvantaged neighbourhoods across Britain.

Reference: Social Life, Assessing the impact of People's Health Trust's programmes: Wave 3, 2023.

"I love coming down to the group. I have lots of mental health problems and coming here helps me get support and get out of the house."

Communities project participant

Eight in ten Local Conversations report increasing their influence over services in their neighbourhoods.

Reference: Social Life, Assessing the impact of People's Health Trust's programmes: Wave 3, 2023.

"The Local Conversation has been probably the most empowering project I have seen, heard of, or taken part in."

Local Conversation participant

Health inequalities

Addressing the scale of the problem

Whilst our funded partners are making a significant difference in their communities, the scale of the problem of health inequalities is huge. Our health is impacted by factors beyond our control. Where we live, and our identity can unfairly impact on life expectancy and the quality of our lives.

Health inequalities have worsened over the last decade, and there is evidence that this is partly due to austerity and cuts to public services. The cost of living crisis risks further widening health inequalities.

Men who are born in the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods in Scotland die 13.5 years younger than those born in affluent areas, and women in the most disadvantaged areas of Scotland live 25 fewer years in good health. The gaps are widening, and recent years have seen a decline in life expectancy for people living in the most disadvantaged areas. In England and Wales, the situation is only marginally better. Each year, millions of people across the UK live in poor health and have their lives cut short due to avoidable health inequalities and without action the problem is only getting worse.

Our homes, work and income are all critical to our health, but too many people don't have access to secure and safe homes or adequate income or working conditions. One in five people were living in poverty in the UK in 2020/21, and 69% of these people were living in deep poverty.⁴ Poor quality homes directly impact on mental and physical health through damp, mould and stress. In 2021, 14% of homes (3.4 million) in England failed to meet the Decent Homes Standard, according to the English Housing Survey.⁵ In Scotland, 30% of privately rented homes and 20% of social rented homes have urgent disrepair to one or more critical elements - which present a serious and immediate risk to a person's health or safety.

Some groups of people face severe health inequalities, particularly disabled people, people with learning disabilities, communities experiencing racial inequity and LGBT+ communities. A recent study highlighted the impact discrimination and structural racism can have on people with intersecting identities: the average age of death for people with a learning disability who are from an ethnic minority is 34 years, just over half the life expectancy of white people with a learning disability.

Increasing our impact

Whilst the scale of health inequalities is huge, we can and are changing this.

Many communities are struggling with the cost of living crisis, the impacts of austerity upon public services and the lasting impacts of Covid-19. Our work shows that when communities have the resources and the power, they can make the change. But there are many people and communities who have not had this opportunity.

With more funding, we could develop our programmes to support even more communities experiencing poor health across Great Britain.

And we can continue to push for policies at local, regional and national levels that tackle health inequalities - and ensure everyone has the chance to live a long and healthy life.

⁴ UK Poverty 2023, JRF, 2023.

⁵ English Housing Survey 2021 to 2022: headline report, Department for Levelling up, Housing and Communities, 2022.

⁶ We deserve better: Ethnic minorities with a learning disability and access to healthcare, University of Lancaster, 2023. [On average, people with learning disabilities die 23 to 27 years earlier than people without learning disabilities. Learning Disability Mortality Review, University of Bristol, 2018.]

*“Whilst our funded partners
are making a significant difference in their communities, the scale
of the problem of health inequalities is huge.”*

Men born in the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods in Scotland die 13.5 years younger than those born in affluent areas.

Reference: National Records of Scotland, 2022.

One in five people were living in poverty in the UK in 2020/21

Reference: Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2023.

*“With more funding, we could develop our programmes to support
even more communities experiencing poor health across Great
Britain.”*

Neighbourhood influencing

Project Director Shale Ahmed, pictured left, talks about the challenges of disrepair, insecurity and increasing unaffordability of housing in Lozells, Birmingham, as well as the impact on wellbeing and how the Local Conversation is helping to improve conditions for local residents.

“Housing conditions are getting worse in our area. Some of the cases we’ve dealt with include windows not opening, leaks, widespread mould. Some landlords don’t bother to fix them because there’s no necessity for them to do it. If a tenant raises a problem, they’re threatened with eviction. The house is given to someone else the following month with minimal or no repair. They’re lucky if the house gets a lick of paint.

People are scared to complain to landlords; what happens if you’re served notice and you have to leave the neighbourhood where you’ve lived for years, where your children go to school? The next thing you know you can be 40 miles away. If you’re constantly worried and feel like you can’t talk about the damp or the window not opening, that has a huge burden on mental health and wellbeing. We’ve heard people say they would rather live in a damp house with a towel on the mattress with a one-year old child than being uprooted from this neighbourhood.

One of the biggest issues during the pandemic was an increase in vulnerable people who needed housing. It normally takes nine months minimum until someone who has registered for social housing can be assessed, and we’ve seen families wait for years to be able to move into a more suitable home. During Covid-19 we saw housing applications being turned around in a fortnight. This was due to all sorts of external pressures - councils didn’t want to be responsible for a death. After Covid, waiting times went back to nine months which was really frustrating because we knew the system could work in favour of people who need homes and can’t afford to wait.

Part of the problem is that the housing system is so complex. People don’t know what kind of evidence to submit to show their need for adequate housing.

There was one family who were moved from pillar to post, living in a series of hotels for four years. Despite this, they were classified as Band C priority by the council, which means it often takes years to find accommodation. The family didn’t know what kind of paperwork to submit to upgrade them to Band A where they’d be a top priority for a permanent house. We helped them compile and submit the right evidence, showing that their accommodation was overcrowded. Within three months they secured a house down the road from where we’re based.

The difference in their wellbeing is incredible. It’s hard to quantify, but just by looking at them you could tell in their smiles, the way they responded to you, that their quality of life had improved. That’s the best thing for us as an organisation.”

More about this project

Local Conversation in Lozells, Aspire & Succeed

Location: Lozells, Birmingham

Health Lottery West Midlands

The Local Conversation in Lozells, supported by Aspire & Succeed works with the local community to improve their health through a range of activities focused on jobs and income, housing and the environment. They have a focus on children and young people and established the Lozells Health Commission to explore the impact of health inequalities on the community during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Funding amount:

£37,295

2022/23

Homes and health

Having a safe, secure and affordable home is one of the building blocks of health, but it is not available to everyone.

Too many people in England, Scotland and Wales are living in poor quality, insecure housing particularly in the private and social rented sectors. Unequal access to affordable, secure and good quality homes means that, for many people, poor housing is a direct cause of short and long term health issues.

Bad housing can mean unhealthy living conditions, with problems such as damp and cold, which are made worse by poor insulation and rising fuel costs, overcrowding, a lack of poor-quality repairs and unsuitable facilities which can impact the ability to make safe and healthy food. These problems can lead to respiratory conditions, poor cardiovascular health, musculoskeletal problems amongst other health conditions, as well as having a negative impact on mental health.

Insecure tenancies lead to stress which worsens physical and mental health, due to the uncertainty of living in temporary accommodation or worrying about unfair eviction. Poor quality housing can also impact our social relationships.

Low-income households, minority ethnic communities, particularly Bangladeshi, Black Caribbean, Mixed White/Black African and Gypsy/Traveller communities, disabled people and people seeking asylum are most likely to experience poor-quality housing. These impacts are particularly stark for people experiencing multiple forms of disadvantage and are further entrenching health inequalities.

Our work on housing

Many local organisations we support are already working to address housing issues in their communities. Our belief is that there is even more that can be done to change things for the better, and this needs to involve the people and organisations most affected. Over the last year, we have developed a new pilot funding programme, Homes for Health, focussed on the key issues affecting people living in rented homes. Ten projects are beginning in November and the programme will provide resources, training, and facilitate a network to help to find practical, on-the-ground solutions, as well as encouraging action by decision-makers.

Learning from our network of funded partners about how housing issues are affecting their communities has informed this pilot programme and, coupled with research on the links between homes and health, will continue to inform our policy work as we share learnings and recommendations with local and national policymakers. We are also raising awareness of housing issues and the negative impact they are having in communities we support, and are responding to the external policy context including to proposed legislation.

One in five private renters reported that their housing issues or worries made them physically sick.

39% have housing problems or worries that leave them feeling stressed and anxious.

Reference: Health of one in five renters harmed by their home, Shelter, 2021.

A happy place

Project member Sherina and project lead Jacqueline talk about the importance of steel pan lessons and group meet ups to the St. Vincentian community in High Wycombe.

Sheerena: “Going to steel pan is my happy place. It’s where I talk to the other age groups. During Covid, we had our online lessons but you need to be there talking to have a vibe going on.

A few years ago I was in a low spot, so I dipped out of steel pans for a while, but when I came back again I was so grateful to have the opportunity to do it. It’s where I get to be myself.”

Jaqueline Roberts: “What we do is empowering and led by our members. They’re confident about saying what they like and don’t like. It’s a safe, warm place to meet and talk, which is particularly important during the cost-of-living crisis. Even if people don’t play the steel pans, they’ll come for a chinwag and a laugh and a joke.

We’re seeing the stark reality of the effects of health inequalities such as problems accessing care and poverty that’s been exacerbated by the price of gas and electricity, which we already knew were there, but thanks to the immense support, we can bring people together and improve their wellbeing. We’ve found our own niche and the funding will help us do more.

It’s all happy music - just talking about it brings joy. Across all age groups it’s about coming together. For some of our younger people, this is an activity they don’t have with their school friends, so they’re making new ones.

We don’t try and give history lectures, but they’re learning about their heritage and culture. I think for the older generation it’s about decreasing isolation and making new friendships.

We have a large population of Vincentians and I’ve seen the progression as people make friends and start to talk about their issues.

This year, people are getting back to normal - they’re out and about and asking to do more. Thanks to funding, we can put on more events.”

“Playing the steel pans is my happy place.”

Sheerena

More about this project

Community Connections, SV2G (St Vincent and the 2nd Generation)

Location: High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire

Health Lottery South East

Community Connections brings together local people from minoritised ethnic backgrounds to develop new skills and increase confidence and mental wellbeing. The project organises weekly steelpan drum lessons and fortnightly support sessions to bring together intergenerational groups to improve mental health.

Funding amount:

£39,572

Importance of partnership

John Hume, Chief Executive and Jenny Edwards, Chair reflect on the year.

“The past twelve months has been challenging for many of us. The cost of living reached beyond the headlines and into our homes and families as costs rose rapidly. People living in disadvantaged communities experienced the impact of this on their health more than most and more than ever.

The sharp increase in the cost of essential everyday items, such as food, fuel and rent, is tough for anyone, but can be particularly brutal for people who are isolated and alone, without the emotional and practical support that can help us through difficult times. Working with others helps to share the load, to share thinking and enables the creation of local practical solutions. So many of the local groups we work with are doing just that - bringing people together to overcome isolation, work on some practical things and helping to lift people’s wellbeing and health in tough circumstances.

For the Trust, our main partnerships over the year have, as always, been with the people and communities we fund across England, Scotland and Wales. It has been so important at this critical time to be able to support them to tackle the injustices which lead to worsening health. The community initiatives to address social isolation, to support people into good work, to create stronger local connections, and to address food poverty and sustainability - all these help protect people’s health and wellbeing.

It is through our network of hundreds of local organisations that we heard the early warning signs of a growing mental health crisis amongst charity sector workers. As a result, we’re working with other funders to explore how to better support the mental health of the people working in organisations we fund. We also responded to what we were hearing about the cost of living and housing and the impact on isolation, stress and mental health. This has encouraged us to shift our funding to prioritise these critical areas.

We know that it is essential to tackle the real causes of health inequalities to make progress. But we also know that the links between health and housing, isolation, our environments, jobs, income and food are not always easily understood. That’s why we have partnered with Health Equals to create the first national public-facing campaign to focus on the building blocks of health. The Trust convened the advisory group for this work, ensuring that the voices of the people most affected by these issues were heard. We have also worked with What Works Centre for Wellbeing to bring together a review of the evidence around community control and wellbeing.

Our long-standing partnership with the Living Wage Foundation has continued. We know the impact that pay and conditions can have on mental and physical health. This has been accompanied by research on the impact of the living wage on health with Warwick

University and Lancaster University and our continued support for the Living Wage Funders scheme, which addresses low pay in the third sector.

At the request of the Department of Health and Social Care we have consulted people from our networks of funded partners to bring their views to the Government's thinking on mental health. We have also developed sessions for the Greater London Authority, looking at the impact of discrimination on health - a theme we will continue next year with research into discrimination and health. We have continued our important partnership with Funders Race Equality Alliance, which helps the Trust to deliver towards its ambitious plan to become an anti-racist and anti-oppression organisation.

It's clear that the climate crisis has an impact on health and that it has a greater negative impact on those who are worse off. That is why we are working with other funders to join forces on the Funder Commitment on Climate Change, alongside work with New Philanthropy Capital as part of their Everyone's Environment programme.

The scale of the problems communities face is far greater than any funder can manage alone. Therefore this year we are beginning to seek relationships with new corporate sector partners. We hope to draw on their experience and skills to further our work locally, regionally and nationally.

Once again, we express our deepest gratitude to The Health Lottery and to all the people who play and contribute to the good causes. This is what enables the Trust to fund local charities and communities to do their valuable work that touches hundreds of thousands of lives each year for the better."

"Our main partnerships over the year have, as always, been with the people and communities we fund across England, Scotland and Wales. It has been so important at this critical time to be able to support them to tackle the injustices which lead to worsening health."

"The links between health and housing, isolation, our environments, jobs, income and food are not always easily understood. That's why we have partnered with Health Equals to create the first national public-facing campaign to focus on the building blocks of health."

Providing a purpose

Project member Fiona speaks about her recovery and why the cost of living is now her biggest concern.

“I moved back to Greenock in 2019 after my husband and I separated. I had become dependent on alcohol and this was my opportunity for recovery. I saw a leaflet for Moving On and I’ve been involved ever since.

The project gave me a purpose when I needed one. I had to get up, I had to get washed, dressed and get myself from A to B.

As my recovery gets better, my mental health improves. I’m also able to do more physically, whether that’s yoga or cycling or the hikes the staff organise. It all starts to gel.

Now the cost of living is my biggest concern. I have a pre-payment energy meter and as soon as I put the heating on it’s like watching the Countdown clock on TV - you don’t have much time.

I have Reynaud’s Syndrome, which affects the circulation in my hands and feet. If they get cold or if I’m not moving around enough, the pain is excruciating. I’ll put the heating on for two hours and just as it’s starting to make a difference I have to turn it off because it costs nearly five pounds. I’ll put on gloves and extra socks instead.

If there’s extra money it goes on the gas and electric. For everything else, I’ve cut back a lot more. I go straight to the reduced section in the supermarket. I’ll price compare supermarkets and go where I think is best for saving. I try to bulk cook and freeze food because it’s cheaper.

The social impact is huge, too. Because of the cost of everything, a lot of people are not living, they’re existing. It’s great to have Moving On and the different things they run. The price of energy and how much it costs for groceries makes me anxious though, and I just hope my anxiety doesn’t take over. I’m trying not to think too far ahead.”

“Because of the cost of everything, a lot of people are not living, they’re existing.”

More about this project

Getting Outdoors, Moving On (Inverclyde)

Location: Greenock, Scotland

Health Lottery Scotland

Getting Outdoors supports people affected by isolation and stigmatisation related to alcohol and drugs. The group cycle, hike and walk together which supports social connections and improves their physical and mental health.

Funding amount:

£16,277

Cost of living crisis

People's incomes are not keeping pace with rising costs, in particular the costs of energy, fuel, homes, and food.

The cost of living crisis is a health crisis because of its impact on the building blocks of health - our income, homes and access to food. Rising prices mean that people living on the lowest incomes are paying even more for their essentials, or they're having to cut back.

The cost of living crisis is leaving more and more people unable to afford to buy enough food. Food bank use was on the rise before the crisis and is increasing. In 2022, food banks reported increasing demand while donations fell, and healthy food continues to be more expensive than unhealthy food. The crisis is also increasing fuel poverty which is linked to poor health.

The cost of living crisis is also pushing more people into debt. Both debt and low income cause stress, depression and anxiety, all of which have a huge impact on our health. Research has shown that almost one in two adults struggling with debt has a mental health problem. People who are forced to pay their basic living costs by increasing their debts are also the people whose health is most affected by their financial situation - they are more likely to have a disability, or have an anxiety or panic disorder, for example.

Our work on the cost of living crisis

As a funder, People's Health Trust has responded to the crisis by offering more flexibility on our grants and by considering how projects are responding to the cost of living crisis and/or supporting mental health, alongside our other criteria when making new grants.

We have listened to the experiences of our funded partners. Through our networks, we brought funded partners together to share experiences and inform our future policy and practice through two regional network events.

The poorest 20% of families spend over 40% of their income on essentials

Reference: Family spending workbook 1: detailed expenditure and trends, Office for National Statistics, 2023.

[Find out more about the cost of living crisis and health.](#)

Renewing our community spirit

Project member Sheila speaks about moving to the Afan Valley, Wales and how the project made her feel less isolated following a cancer diagnosis.

“It’s been difficult since I moved to the Afan valley. I moved here for a fresh start once my kids had all moved out, but after eight months I was diagnosed with cancer and found myself travelling to chemotherapy sessions alone. I felt so isolated. The rest of my family are still in Kent and I have children and grandchildren in Norfolk too.

Everyone is incredibly friendly here but there aren’t a lot of social spaces left. One morning when I was in recovery a neighbour told me about the art classes at Cymer Afan Community Library. I didn’t know about the place until I attended my first art class; since then I’ve barely kept away. The library is the only real place we’ve got left in the valley, and the classes it puts on are something to look forward to.

The art classes are a lot of fun. Recently we’ve been keeping sketchbooks, but the art we do changes every month. We’ve worked with papier mâché and oil paints - all sorts - and the best of the work is hung up around the library. Occasionally works are sold, too.

I hadn’t worked on art since school, but lots of people in the class have less experience than me and they have improved. I’d say I’ve clearly improved as well so it’s obviously helping our art skills, but it’s more about the social side, having a chat and a coffee. We all meet outside of the classes now as well so the library has really helped not just me but everyone’s social life.

There are movie nights once a month with popcorn which are completely free and a lot of children come because it’s a warm and friendly space. There are the knit and natter and yoga classes, too. There’s a food cupboard available as well where people can access food for low or no cost which is increasingly relied on.

You’re welcome at the library no matter what time of day and it means so much to my neighbours and me. It wouldn’t be the same here without the library and all the sessions it puts on.”

“The library is the only real place we’ve got left in the valley. It wouldn’t be the same here without the library and all the sessions it puts on.”

More about this project

Renewing Our Community Spirit, Cymer Afan Community Library

Location: Afan Valley, Wales

Health Lottery Wales

Renewing Our Community Spirit helps restore Cymer Afan Community Library as a local hub following the Covid-19 pandemic. It helps the library host a range of activities for all members of the neighbourhood including a toddler group, art classes, movie nights, book club, needle and yarn group and a coffee morning.

Funding amount:

£15,000

Our partnership

Why we support People's Health Trust

Lebby Eyres, Chief Executive of The Health Lottery

“In the past, the public has struggled to understand the concept of health inequalities but it was brought home to all of us during the pandemic.

Many citizens, who had no option but to continue to go outside their homes to work, suffered hugely as did those most disadvantaged in society.

The charities supported through The Health Lottery tackle problems right at the heart of the community. I've found it inspiring reading the stories of those our players have helped, from young carers to refugees to people with disabilities whose lives have been enhanced by music, art and sport.

Military veteran, Roch Rochester, pictured above, had an undiagnosed broken neck for years and was struggling with limited mobility, having once been an elite athlete. He's found freedom out on the water with Plymouth Youth Sailing. As a rower, I found his story particularly moving.

“I've found it inspiring reading the stories of those our players have helped, from young carers to refugees to people with disabilities whose lives have been enhanced by music, art and sport.”

[Find out more about The Health Lottery.](#)

Skills and safety

Project lead Heather Sayer helps young people with learning disabilities learn how to make pottery, food and clothes, and sell the goods at local hub Willow Tree Stores.

“I got involved with Willow Tree because my daughter has a learning disability and there was nothing for her to do when she was a child. Care during the day costs around £170 and doesn’t help people like her to use their skills.

A lot of our members have untapped skills. One of our members is doing a degree in architecture and when we were first moving to the Willow Tree Stores, they worked on the plans for the building and learned a lot about reading blueprints, understanding ratios. All of this really helped them present well in the interview for their course.

One member, Michael, started coming because he was getting into a bit of trouble and could be hotheaded and frustrated when things weren’t accessible to him. Since he joined, he’s improved his maths and can identify what bus number he needs to get home or to get to where he needs to go. He’s learned to count money. We helped teach him to cook and now he wants to be a fitness instructor because he knows about nutrition and exercise.

We have a kiln and a pottery wheel where we teach members to make plant pots! We grow the plants too in the greenhouse, because people will give us cuttings of unusual plants and we propagate them. Members make pots for the plants they grow and we sell them in the stores. What members learn with us is so important for them to realise their potential and to feel more connected to the world.

We have a big county lines issue here [the transportation of drugs across county borders]. People with a learning disability are often used as runners because the gangs know that they won’t be convicted. They’re vulnerable. That’s a huge driving force behind our training and work making Gorleston High Street shops safe for everyone. Our guys are aware that if they enter a shop and they feel vulnerable because someone asks them to do something - and it can be as unassuming as ‘can you take this parcel to such-and-such and I’ll buy you a CD player?’ - they can approach someone from the shop who can provide help.

The worth of having these spaces is huge. It started out as having one safe space at Willow Tree Stores, but we now have lots of safe spaces.”

“People with a learning disability are often used as runners in county lines trafficking because the gangs know that they won’t be convicted. They’re vulnerable.”

More about this project

Willow Tree Stores, Willow Tree

Location: Great Yarmouth, Norfolk

Health Lottery East

Willow Tree Stores supports disabled people and people with learning disabilities or mental health challenges to learn new skills by creating pottery, growing plants, making clothes and food, and selling these goods at the Willow Tree Stores shop. It also advocates for its members to make the surrounding area more accessible and to create more safe spaces.

Funding amount:

£32,323

The power of language

Lian, a student leader with English for Action (EFA), and Stephanie, a Development Manager, discuss how the project provides support for refugees, migrants and people seeking asylum.

Lian (pictured main image): “When I first arrived from China several years ago, I couldn’t speak English. I was scared to go out and I lost my social and independent life. The English classes EFA provide helped to change my life.

Because I’m a little bit older it’s taken me longer to develop my English and also I’m a little bit shy, and I annoy myself sometimes when I can’t make progress as quickly as I would like, but the group and especially the teacher Lucie always supports me.

I have a better social life now, I do a lot of activities. We go to a lot of places together, we are comfortable with one another and we trust one another. The group has totally changed my life.”

Stephanie: “Our main focus is providing free English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes to anyone who needs them. We also work on community organising by bringing people together and trying to change things as much as possible for our participants.

We have a Safe Surgeries campaign which is about making sure GP surgeries know the laws around registering and that access to universal healthcare is a human right. There are some GP surgeries that will ask for passports or documents that aren’t legally required. We want surgeries in Greenwich to train up their staff to improve ways they interact with people who have lower levels of English.

Mental health is a big part of our work, too. We have become a Be Well Hub, a space where people can talk openly about their mental health without stigma being attached to it, and where necessary we help people find professional support. It can be difficult and lonely for people whose first language is not English. It can be very isolating.

Our ESOL for Work programme is different in all our locations. In Greenwich we have networking and skills workshops around CV and cover letter writing. People want to hear how to write cover letters or how to do well in job interviews. There are a lot of mothers in the class so we deal with issues around confidence in work which can be fragile when requesting maternity leave or childcare needs. These classes and all the members give one another confidence and that’s one of the most important parts of what we do.”

“The group has totally changed my life.”

Lian

More about this project

Language for Change, English For Action Location: Greenwich, London
Health Lottery London East

Language for Change supports migrants and refugees living in Greenwich to improve their English language skills to help them advocate for social issues affecting them, including unfit housing, difficulty in finding work and the prevalence of hate crime.

Funding amount:

£40,000

Mental health

Our mental health is affected by a range of factors such as our social connections, where we live, our jobs, our level of income, our access to green spaces, how safe we feel and whether or not we face discrimination.

Over the past decade, through austerity, the Covid-19 pandemic and the cost of living crisis, we've seen rates of mental health problems rise, particularly amongst communities experiencing poverty, disadvantage or discrimination. Children in the 20% lowest income households are four times more likely to experience mental health problems compared with those from wealthy households.¹

Some marginalised groups are more likely to experience mental ill health: over half of LGBT+ people experience depression, compared to one in six of the overall population. Black women experience a higher level of poor mental health, with almost one in three per week reporting a common mental health problem according to government figures from 2020, compared to one in five white women and one in six of the overall population.

There is also inequity in treatment rates. People from marginalised groups are less likely to seek help or be treated for mental health conditions like anxiety or depression too.

Our work on mental health

We have seen the impact of deteriorating mental health in the communities our funded partners work in, and on the volunteers and staff in those organisations. As a result, we have actively encouraged applications from projects aiming to address mental health problems in our Active Communities funding rounds.

Rising needs, and the additional prioritisation in our funding criteria, have contributed to a notable rise in the number of funded projects including a mental health dimension, and we expect this to continue through this strategy.

Following the publication of our report in June 2022 which documented the impact of the increasing demand on the mental health of voluntary and community sector staff, we have this year convened a group of funders to help to address this issue. This collaboration is developing a set of principles to guide funders on how to support and protect the mental health of staff working in an organisation that they fund, and to advocate for a co-ordinated strategy to address their needs.

¹ Poverty, economic inequality and mental health, Centre for Mental Health, 2022.

People with severe mental illness live 20 fewer years than the general population in England.

Reference: Health Matters. Reducing health inequalities in mental illness, Public Health England, 2018.

[Find out more about mental health inequalities.](#)

Creativity and wellbeing

Jo, who has autism, talks about how art classes in her former mining town provided relief following the death of her parents.

“Thorne, in Doncaster, is an ex-mining community so a lot of things have been lost, but so many people here are creative and good with their hands. They need a way to express themselves.

I started coming to the sessions after lockdown when I’d felt isolated. I have autism, and I’ve always suffered from depression. I lived with my parents all my life but during Covid-19 my mum and dad died and I was on my own for the first time, which was very hard.

Originally, I asked the people running the sessions if they could do a textiles workshop as that’s something I’ve always been interested in, and then I became involved with the drawing classes. It was cathartic to have somewhere to come and meet nice people, to have a laugh.

I wasn’t very good at drawing to begin with, but I love it now. I make a lot of art about my family. I’ve taken some of the pieces I’ve drawn to my parents’ grave.

I’ve been teaching my niece to draw, and now I volunteer at the project, helping set up and provide drinks, and I even help with drawing classes, teaching people to draw cartoon characters. I did one of a local café which they now exhibit.

I’m lucky to have met so many great people through the art classes. They make me happy and I really look forward to Fridays.”

“It was cathartic to have somewhere to come and meet nice people, to have a laugh.”

More about this project

Our Town Two, Artistic Spectrum

Location: Doncaster, South Yorkshire

Health Lottery Yorkshire & Humber

Our Town Two brings people together who are socially isolated including people with autism, people with learning disabilities, older people and single parents to run weekly art classes in the small town of Thorne in South Yorkshire. Sessions cover how to use a variety of materials including clay, painting, drawing and collage to express aspects of participants’ daily, and work is often exhibited in a local gallery space.

Funding amount:

£32,178

Learning and networks

The Trust has developed an extensive evidence base in recent years through formal and informal learning. Formal learning includes external independent evaluations and commissioned research, and informal learning is drawn from progress reports from funded partners and network meetings.

Our learning

The Trust has developed an extensive evidence base in recent years through formal and informal learning.

Our Active Communities funding programme focuses on building people's social connections and community power - critical building blocks of health. The independent evaluation revealed 93% of participants making friends - a major contribution to reducing our isolation epidemic.¹ More than four in five participants felt they had more control, confidence and skills, as well as belief that people can improve the local area. The statistics far surpass national averages, and those for similarly disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

The Local Conversations funding programme is built upon similar foundations, with greater focus upon direct action and influencing to improve building blocks of health including our homes and local environments. The evaluation showed participants developing strong social connections, trust and belonging, building community power and influencing change, with 83% feeling they can change the way their area is run, compared against just over 50% in England nationally.² Residents involved demonstrated higher life satisfaction, stronger belief that life is worthwhile, greater happiness and lower anxiety levels than averages for England, also far surpassing other disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

To build on the previous research, between 2021 and 2023 the Trust commissioned Social Life, a social research and innovation centre, to undertake four waves of surveying of funded partners. Their work shows even stronger social outcomes for participants of both programmes and closer focus upon the factors widening health inequalities (see p 4/5). Future research will explore the relationship between participation and health outcomes.

In 2023-24, the Trust will launch Homes for Health - an innovative pilot working with communities and local organisations to understand how community action can address poor housing conditions (see p 10). An independent evaluation will assess impacts to tenants' health and wellbeing as well as the efficacy of the fund.

We continue to work closely with academics at the Universities of Lancaster and Warwick and the Living Wage Foundation to explore the relationship between the Real Living Wage, health and wellbeing, and will be publishing this research later in 2023.

Networks and capacity building

Our networks of funded partners are a critical part of our current strategy. We have committed to work with charities and groups in marginalised communities and with people who are most affected by ill-health and early death, to help to shape our funding programmes and influencing work. This year we have brought our networks together to share their experiences and views on the impact of the cost of living crisis, mental health and housing in communities experiencing extreme disadvantage. In these sessions, funded partners have helped to influence our policy calls and have contributed to shaping our new Homes for Health funding programme.

In August and September, the Trust also brought funded partners together in a series of events to discuss what they think the priorities should be for the new Government after the General Election. These sessions produced a rich variety of suggestions of what could be done by decision makers to reduce health inequalities in Great Britain, and the Trust will be sharing these with political parties ahead of the election to encourage their inclusion in manifestos.

More than 200 funded partner representatives from 120 organisations took part in our capacity building and training offer this year. Participants benefitted from sessions on a range of topics including digital inclusion, finance, fundraising, governance, recruitment and safeguarding.

¹ People's Health Trust and Ecorys, Active Communities Programme Evaluation, 2020.

² People's Health Trust and New Economics Foundation, Evaluating the impact of Local Conversations 2016 - 2021.

[Read our Evaluations.](#)

Thank you

Our funded partners provide a critical lifeline to communities experiencing disadvantage. They have offered vital support with the challenges of mental health, social isolation and the cost of living crisis - through providing community spaces, skills and training, and free and low cost activities that support mental health and wellbeing. All of this has meant our funding has been targeted at neighbourhoods that need it most, and where the effects of the ongoing cost of living crisis are most acutely felt.

An enormous thank you to players of The Health Lottery, helping to raise more than £129m so far.

With your support, we've been able to fund over 3,500 projects helping more than 653,000 people across Great Britain.

“Thanks to the grant, we’ve got all this space with five rooms of creativity. It’s a real lifeline for a lot of people.”

Sue Tebble, Founder, Mind the Gap

Organisations funded in 2023/2023

A

Ability Shetland
Acting Angels CIC
Activiteens
African Lanarkshire for Mental Health
Aldershot Amateur Boxing Club
All Nations Ministries
Aspire & Succeed

B

BARC (Bridgend Adult Resource Centre)
Community Outreach Centre
BEfriend
Belville Community Garden Trust
Bengali Women's Project (BWP)
Blackburn with Darwen Healthy Living
Bletchley Youth Centre
Bolton Carers Support
Bolton Community Development Partnership
Bromley Farm Community Development Trust

C

Caribbean & African Health Network
Central African Youth in Enfield - CAYE
Central Cheshire Buddy Scheme
Chalkhill Community Action
Citizens UK Charity
Community Honeycomb CIC
Community Renewal Trust
Cornwall Downs Syndrome Support Group

D

Dance Centred CIC
Dedicated (East Midlands) Community Interest Company
DIAL South Essex
Disability Advice and Support Hillingdon (DASH)
Down Syndrome Cheshire

E

Eastleigh Youth and Community Trust
Edberts House
Education & Skills Development Group (ESDEG)

F

Face Front Inclusive Theatre Limited
Families in Action Together Ltd
Farnworth Baptist Church
Fearon Community Association Ltd
Feathers Futures CIO
Flotta Mens Shed and Gardeners Association
Flourishing Faifley
Friends of Angel Gardens
Friends Of Eastville Park
Future Female Society CIC

H

Hackney People First
Hanseatic Union
Hayaat Women Trust
Headspace Bolton C.I.C
Highlights
Hollings Youth Association CIC
Honey Hope Farm Community Interest Company
Hope Long Eaton
Hope Springs Horticulture Community Interest Company
Horn Development Association (CIC)
Hoy & Walls Community Garden
Hoy Youth Hub
Huntingdon Community Action Projects

I

INTISAAR

J

Jazanne Arts CIC
Jus Kidz
Justice Prince CIC

L

Leeds Muslim Youth Forum
Leys Community Development Initiative
Living Rent
Llwynhendy and Pemberton Forum
London Tigers Ltd

M

Made With Love Activity Group
Maze Matters
Med3 Music
Merstham Community Facility Trust
MensCraft
Mindful Art Club
Money A+E U.K. Community Interest Company
Motherwell Cheshire CIO
Mountford Growing Community
Moving Forward

N

Newport Yemini Community Association (NYCA)
North Wingfield Community Allotment

O

One Stop Advice & Training Centre
Opening Doors
Our Way Our Say
Out Loud Music Community Interest Company

P

Pembrokeshire Weightlifting
Pentrebane Zone
Pentref Tyleri CBC
Peoples Pantry Ellesmere Port
Phoenix Song Project
PlayPeace SCIO
Plymouth Hope
Plymouth Youth Sailing Club
Ponders End Community Development Trust
Pride in Luton
Punjabi Theatre Academy

R

Razed Roof
Refugees in Effective and Active Partnership (REAP)
Rising High Community Bakery
RJ Working Charitable Incorporated Organisation

S

Sadaga Group

SEND R US (CIC)
Shift Together CIC
Shirehampton Community Action Forum
Society Alive CIC
Somali Kitchen Bristol CIC
Soul Purpose 360 CIC
Soundwell Music Therapy Trust
Stand Together Network
Step Up 2 Fitness
Stepping Stone Theatre for Mental Health
Sunbeams London Ltd
Support Northamptonshire
Supporting People Achieving Real Choice [SPARC]
SV2G - St.Vincent & the Grenadines 2nd Generation

T

Teen Action
The Association of Community Organisations for Reform Now Ltd. (ACORN)
The Bipolar Lift CIC
The Birth Partner Project
The Bivol Trust
The Bradford Bulls Foundation
The Bridge Community Project
The Brock Garden Centre SCIO
The Organic Cookery School Ltd
The Vine Centre Trust
The Women's Community Forum
The Zebra Collective Ltd
Tillery Action For You Ltd
Tonic Music for Mental Health
Turkish Youth Community Association

V

Vibrant Warsop Community Interest Company
VIP Arts & Sports Academy

W

Whitleigh Community Trust
Willow Tree
Wisbech Projects CIC
WORTH: Women on the Road to Healing

Y

YM Empower
YOH

Finance and governance

How we manage the organisation and our funds

The work of the Trust is overseen by our Board of Trustees who bring different experiences and backgrounds. In addition, we have two committees providing advice on finance, audit and operations, and strategic oversight on policy, research and advocacy, with places for independent members on both.

The Board has adopted the Association of Charitable Foundations' (ACF) Stronger Foundations framework to systematically review the running of the organisation and benchmark itself against other trusts and foundations.

Work on The Trust's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Action Plan was a priority for this year, and whilst there is still much to do, we made good progress in our ambition to become an active anti-racist and anti-oppression charity.

The Trust is in the process of recruiting three new Trustees as part of its commitment to improve the diversity of the board to better reflect the communities it supports. We are particularly focussing on people from communities experiencing racial inequality, disabled people, and people with deep experience of life in the areas we support.

As well as looking at EDI at board level, we have worked to improve our practice across the organisation. This includes working with our funded partners to inform the language we use to describe the diverse communities we work with and considering how we improve the data we collect from our funded partners. As part of this we have worked with the Association of ACF's Funders Collaborative Hub to explore the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) data standard. We continue to benchmark our EDI work in grant making through the Funders for Racial Equality Alliance (FREAA) as well as working extensively with the staff team to improve our collective understanding of EDI in practice, and to ensure we are an inclusive place of work.

As part of our strategic goal to make a significant contribution to address the climate crisis, we signed up to ACF's Funder Commitment on Climate Change and are taking action across its six pillars. We will submit our first report in 2024.

Finance 2022/23

The cost of living crisis continues to have a significant impact in the most disadvantaged communities across England, Scotland and Wales. The Trust has tried to respond to this through support for our funded partners to help them with the rising cost of living. For more information, please see page 18.

We are operating in a tough environment and this is not an easy time. Addressing health inequalities is complex and needs significant investment. We are actively developing further partnership work alongside our existing trusted partnerships to help meet the scale of demand. The Board of Trustees has agreed plans to diversify our partnerships over the next five years.

Diversifying our partnerships will help support a continued stable income for the Trust, allowing us to continue and grow our work to address health inequalities across Great Britain.

The Trust takes care to make sure that it has strong reserves to allow it to support its programmes so that we can continue to challenge health inequalities now and in the future.

[The Trustees' Reports and Accounts is available on our website.](#)

[Find out more about our trustees.](#)

Support us

Health in Great Britain is a major concern.

Preventing lives from being cut short is a major challenge but change is possible.

Our funded partners - local charitable organisations across England, Scotland and Wales - are on the front line, supporting thousands of people experiencing poor mental and physical health. We know that people are struggling to heat their homes, afford food and to pay bills. This is taking a toll on mental as well as physical health and your support has never been more needed. We have much more demand for grants than we can fund.

Playing The Health Lottery raises money that allows us to give to those people who we know need it the most. You can also donate to the Trust directly via JustGiving. We would also like to hear from you if you are a company interested in how you can partner with People's Health Trust.

Contact us to discuss ways we can work together to address health inequalities.

[Contact us](#)

Please consider helping us to fund more projects making a difference in neighbourhoods near you by playing The Health Lottery.

[Play now](#)

You can also donate to the Trust directly via JustGiving. Thank you.

[Donate now](#)

People's Health Trust

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