

Voluntary**Action**Islington

Supporting a voluntary sector response to the Fairness
Commission

Wednesday 1st September

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Thank you to the 41 groups and organisations that partook in the collection of evidence to make up this report.

1.0 Introduction

Voluntary Action Islington aims to promote a thriving, effective and influential third sector working to improve the quality of life and the life chances of people in Islington.

Change on the basis of evidence is something we have pioneered over the last two years. Our policy and research project combines academic research methodologies with our knowledge of how to access the stories and experience of some of the borough's seldom-heard communities to ensure that these voices are not only heard, but contribute their expert experience to policy decisions.

As a part of this work, Voluntary Action Islington wanted to support groups to collect and present evidence to the Fairness Commission. We were aware that there was a call for evidence in mid July and we assumed that evidence from voluntary and community groups is most relevant to the meeting topic of "Closing the gap from the bottom up".

A workshop was held in August to collect evidence, which was very well attended considering school holidays and Ramadan. A first report was prepared from the workshop. We understand that there is not an opportunity to formally speak to this meeting as there is limited time however, as we are aware that there is no representation from the voluntary and community sector on the Fairness Commission. We thought it was therefore important to make use of the invitation for the submission of evidence in order to share some success stories and also communicate some of the concerns of particularly the smaller voluntary and community groups we work with. We have also encouraged groups to submit evidence independently and we will continue to do this through out the process.

In Islington there is a wide group of voluntary and community groups that contribute to challenging inequality in the borough and 41 of those groups are represented in this report. They can bring their direct and lived experiences of volunteering and working with the most excluded residents in Islington.

These groups have expert knowledge of working with the most disadvantaged people in Islington. Their work is proven to create improved outcomes for Islington residents. As such, they need to be invested in and be a part of developing the responses to problems not only as 'providers' but as experts within a field as joint problem solvers and decision makers.

1.1 Voluntary and community groups understanding and skill in responding to the disadvantage faced by Islington residents

Many voluntary groups work and support and volunteer in communities that are the most seldom heard, excluded and have the least traction in decision making meetings.

These are the groups that Voluntary Action Islington hopes to support in responding to the call for evidence by the Fairness Commission.

The recognition of how voluntary and community groups can contribute to evidence about Islington residents is perhaps best described by the Islington Compact, defined as the 'partnership agreement about how the statutory sector and third sector will work together' (Compact consortium,2009:1). The compact states:

The third sector helps to build engagement and social capital and contributes to cohesion. The community network helps to develop communication and trust between different communities; and supports volunteering, creating opportunities for thousands of residents to develop new skills and to improve the quality of life in their communities. Third sector organisations can have a good understanding and awareness of community needs and be well placed to reach and advocate on behalf of communities, particularly disadvantaged groups and communities of interest. As a result the local third sector has a valuable role to play in representing, consulting, involving, engaging with and being accountable to Islington residents (Islington Compact Consortium, 2009: 6).

Other authors have described how voluntary and community organisations can work with the statutory sector to challenge disadvantage and in particular, preventative interventions in health:

At present only 4 per cent of NHS funding is spent on prevention. Yet, the evidence shows that partnership working between primary care, local authorities and the third sector to deliver effective universal and targeted preventive interventions can bring important benefits (Marmot 2010: 26).

1.2 Creating a participatory opportunity to discuss fairness

The idea of creating a place where people can share experiences, ideas and views - even if these are opposing views, on achieving social justice was welcomed by the voluntary and community groups we have listened to so far. Our first evidence collecting session (which informs the basis of this report) was over-subscribed and the richness of data we collected, even with this modest and exploratory approach, was indicative of the key role groups can play as partners in helping to create a fairer Islington.

When we asked how many people (of the representatives attending the evidence collection workshop on August 11) knew about or understood the point and importance of the Fairness Commission, a very limited number of people suggested that they had a good grasp of the importance of the Commission's purpose. This is clearly a problem as groups who participated in our workshop understand what it is like for the poorest individuals with the most complex of problems to live in Islington and concretely what practical suggestions they could offer to support the drive towards social justice.

Voluntary groups are passionate about social justice and it is central to their existence and activities. This is what they are aiming to achieve whether it is fair access to statutory services for all people, improved living and housing conditions, opportunities to improve confidence, self esteem and change for excluded young people, support to women who experience multiple problems as a result of poverty, paid employment, domestic violence and abuse, the particular challenges isolated older people experience or trying to get the wider community to 'see' homeless people so that they can be helped to come in from the societal cold. The range of work and support that is delivered by voluntary and community groups is wide but is central to the relief of poverty and deprivation.

1.3 The purpose and structure of the report and its limitations

This report is based on a managed approach to collecting information from 41 groups about their daily experience of working with people who are disadvantaged Islington residents.

We had to consider what evidence would be useful. There is more work to do with the Fairness Commission to establish where gaps of knowledge exist and how voluntary and community groups can contribute concretely to what is not known by the Commission.

As a result, this report is a sign post and it is our view that further more in-depth research should be offered to the Fairness Commission and other decision makers in relation to the experiences and contribution voluntary and community action makes to people most excluded or seldom heard in Islington. We hope that more evidence can be presented to the February meeting of the Fairness Commission. We will also be working with the BME forum to produce another report which could also be presented in February. This first report has been produced to respond to the interim decision making processes and interim report time scale of the Fairness Commission.

The report captures participants' lived experience of what is unfair in Islington. It describes some of the cross-cutting elements that participants pointed to which helped to unlock barriers to participation and enable access to better circumstances for disadvantaged people. The report contains a summary of the types of activities and actions voluntary groups have undertaken to challenge and respond to the experiences of disadvantage and some descriptions of the outcomes and impact of these actions and activities.

We also describe how and where voluntary and community groups sit in relation to statutory services and the positive outcomes and impact as a result of the activity of voluntary and community groups, not only on the individuals they work with, but also for the statutory agencies who avail themselves of the services voluntary and community services offer.

The impact of the processes and decisions made by bodies like the Fairness Commission will directly affect the activities and work that voluntary and community groups do in Islington. This report highlights that the decisions taken will have a proportionally larger impact on the voluntary and community groups working with the most disadvantaged people in Islington.

In the case of considering cuts, we ask the Commission to consider the extra weight of multiple problems and disadvantages that voluntary groups are working with and to see how their work is critically linked with the very people for whom fairness is most important.

2.0 Methodology

Voluntary Action Islington circulated a short notice invitation to groups to attend a meeting titled 'Supporting a voluntary sector response to the Fairness Commission: Collecting evidence for a report and offering resources to describe outcomes and impact' (appendix 1).

31 participants representing 28 organisations in Islington responded to the invitation and attended (there were 3 organisations with more than one representative). In addition there were some organisations that could not attend the meeting, but who wanted to contribute and we asked these organisations to use the questions we used in the meeting as a framework for their contribution to the report. 13 further organisations responded in this way, this bringing the total sample of organisations to 41.

In the context of this report 'participant' refers to respondents to the questions in this evidence collection exercise (those attending, plus those who responded later on).

At the meeting we described the purpose of the Fairness Commission, its composition and we offered an opportunity for community groups to be involved in responding to 5 questions. The majority of these questions were linked to the development trust's Community Impact Mapping Framework (Byrne 2005).

We divided the 30 participants into 5 small groups. Each group was supported by a facilitator who captured participant's answers on flip-chart paper.

The first part of the meeting focused on the following questions:

What disadvantages do communities and individuals face that you work with?

Groups fed back responses to the larger group and discussed examples. The same groups then re-convened to answer the next question:

How does your organisation or activities respond to unfairness and disadvantage?

There were four probe questions:

- What knowledge do you have or skills do you use?
- What networks do you use?
- What activities do you do?
- What other resources do you provide?

The next phase of the meeting invited individuals to **offer on a post-it note a radical suggestion for the Fairness Commission.**

In the last phase of the meeting, we split organisational representatives into groups of two and they interviewed each other for 15 minutes, each answering the final two

questions. For each interview Voluntary Action Islington provided a scribe who wrote down the responses and ensured that each interviewee had an opportunity to return to their responses and add anything else before the interview had ended. These last two questions were aimed at extracting stories about the difference organisations had made in relation to their work around challenging disadvantage and focused on the following two questions:

Describe the differences or change to people's lives your organisation has helped to make.

What difference did your actions make to your community?

The answers to all of the above questions, plus the contributions to the call for 'radical ideas' form the basis for this report.

Following the workshop, groups and organisations that attended were emailed the questions and asked if they wanted to add any more evidence to the report. We received one further case study which has been added.

The answers to all questions were later transcribed into digital form and analysed.

Consent

All participants were clear of the purpose of collecting evidence - where it was going and what it would be used for. There was an opportunity for any individual to stop or opt-out of the process at any time.

There are no real names of individuals used in this report. We have supplied a full list of organisations that contributed to the report in the appendix.

All text in speech marks, or indented in italics are verbatim and taken directly from the written documents produced at the evidence collecting session or sent by participating organisations following on from that date.

The report was written and edited by Voluntary Action Islington's Head of Community Research and circulated for comment to the participants. Ordinarily we would have waited for responses, but on this occasion we had to take this approach because of timescales. However, the content of the report is solidly reliant on the contributions of all participants. We have sent a call out for participants to write directly to the Commission and feedback any further thoughts or suggestions they may have.

Because there were too many examples of activities and outcomes, we selected some that represented the actions of the voluntary groups as a whole. We therefore did not attribute an organisational name to each quote, but attach the full list of participating organisations and how they participated in the appendix.

3.0 Findings

The first question the groups discussed was: **‘what disadvantages do communities and individuals face that you work with?’** Participants were then asked to consider how their organisation or activities responded to unfairness and disadvantage.

There were an incredible number of activities and actions described by groups, for example counselling, advice giving, football, new business start ups, shelters, refuges, translation and interpreting, learning, befriending, lunch clubs. Similarly, there was huge diversity in the types of people taking up these activities, from excluded young people, homeless people, people using mental health services, frail older people, women escaping domestic violence, refugees, trafficked people, people who live in social housing, people with disabilities, people whose first language is not English and unemployed people through to people without recourse to public funds etc. However, despite these differences our analysis of the responses indicated there were two overarching factors common to all of the groups participating in the meeting:

- **All the people who these groups worked or volunteered with experienced disadvantage for some reason or a combination of reasons over a period of time.**
- **All the groups described their activities as helping people move on, change, alleviate and challenge the disadvantage they faced.**

Analysis of the responses from the day suggested consensus around specific aspects of their work which directly relate to these two factors. These aspects, or key themes, we discuss in this report under the following headings:

- **Progress or change**
- **Combating isolation**
- **Helping people access resources and support (removing the barriers to participation)**
- **Getting the wider community involved (raising awareness of issues)**
- **Bringing in resources (for example, volunteers, money and skills)**

In addition to these, two other aspects emerged – firstly that:

- **participating groups are experts**

but that

- **they are also themselves vulnerable** (they experience disadvantage and combat a number of issues to do with the sustainability of the work they do, for example, funding)

3.1 Progress or change

One of the key aspects the groups identified as being central to their work in addressing unfairness was that both the approach they took and the activities themselves were all geared toward creating some degree of progress, or change. At the very heart of their work was the notion that disadvantage could be challenged and fairness achieved – even in incremental steps.

Often this change manifested at an individual level for clients using services and sometimes at a policy level. Sometimes it was a mixture of both:

[We] work with children and young people who have witnessed / experienced domestic violence. [They] are often traumatised, have attachment problems, and can 'act out' i.e. reproduce behaviour. Through, for example, play-workers and one-to-one workers, [our] organisation helps them see that there are other strategies for coping with anger and helps to break the cycle which can often see young people reproducing the abusive behaviour and patterns they have witnessed when they become older.

Sometimes, in addition to helping individual service users move on and change their lives, the work had a preventative effect – actually addressing the issue of unfairness closer to the root than at the branch:

Raising skills and confidence of ability levels for individuals, raising attainment levels for children, finding permanent accommodation, getting users to feel socially included and confident to access services/ opportunities raising awareness of homelessness issues. 150 evictions prevented last year.

We have done work with BME and white youngsters and racial tensions have been diffused. Black and white kids are on the same team (the under 11's) [...] The results are the reduction of anti-social behaviour, opening the minds of young people, raising aspirations, supporting youngsters to go to college or higher education. Providing a range of activities for young people to link into as the schools haven't done this. Created links with primary schools and local adventure playgrounds.

Change or progress was never seen as a static end-point, but rather the beginning point for continuous improvement. Often this means ex-service users or staff volunteering to keep the work going:

I run the parenting class – we use an American model for this and it is the best programme of its kind in the country. This is a new area and the results are really encouraging to see. The course gives them tools; coping mechanisms. It's a tool for integration. It's small group work and trust is built up. A lot gets disclosed in the group, barriers are broken down. At the end we identify two

parents who can go on to establish their own support group – they are encouraged to keep it going.

The young people can develop a range of skills. The project's approach is peer mentoring. Young people open up and experience different things. It develops their motivation levels and it helps to develop their confidence improving their verbal skills, sporting skills physical fitness there is improved understanding of organisational skills and responsibilities working with girls to improves their self confidence

In most cases, lasting change and multiple outcomes could be created by the in-depth knowledge the organisations and groups had of the communities they served. They were inclined to think about lateral responses to local problems that could be achieved by drawing primarily on ideas, enthusiasm, skill and voluntary labour. This type of action created lasting legacy for the communities involved, as well as raising political awareness for specific issues. Often the projects formed links between previously unconnected members of a local community, thus forging cohesion and understanding. Additionally, there were usually concrete financial benefits to local bodies, such as councils, which benefited directly from the investment these groups made in their borough:

[Organisation name's] purpose is to create an inter-generational gardening club to improve social interaction and also the environment. Elderly residents of sheltered housing tended to gardens in front of their houses. [There was also a] secondary school nearby within sight of sheltered housing. [Organisation's name] brought the teenagers and the elderly residents together for the first time. Together they grew vegetables in the front gardens and also did some painting & decorating. The aim was to make it as inclusive as possible, to create social cohesion and break down barriers

Teenagers were challenged to learn about outside community (in this case the elderly community) and the environment. Increased young people's confidence and also young family bonding, especially those from ethnic minority backgrounds who were accustomed to growing their own food in their native countries, and then passed on the knowledge to the children who were born in Britain. This is just one of the many positive knock-on effects.

Studies have shown that there is a correlation between environmental sustainability and poverty. By improving and 'greening' the environment leads to a better standard of living and improves community well-being.

[The organisation] trained up 'Energy Doctors' to visit those who lived in poverty and on low-incomes to make their homes more energy efficient, reducing carbon emissions and fuel poverty. This helped the local council to save costs in sending their own 'energy experts' and also to meet the borough's target of reducing carbon emissions. By training up Energy Doctors, [the organisation] created local job opportunities which in turn alleviate the

economic burden of both local council and local jobcentres paying out benefits. This creates a positive economic impact on both the local and national economies.

The change experienced by clients is often profound and long-lasting. Lives are literally changed by the work voluntary and community groups do:

Substance misuser parents – they had a child, but social services took the child. [organisation's name] helped to facilitate return, supporting treatment, courts, emotional support – the outcome was that the child was back with the family, treatment was finished, they are looking for study opportunities. The child seems happy and the family unit was together.

Because these groups and organisations work on the frontline of service delivery, they are well-placed to understand the complexities and inter-relationships between how disadvantage operates and what is needed at a very practical level to address unfairness, relieve tension and generally create a more fair environment for local people:

[Organisation's name] was established in 1996 and prides itself on offering holistic support for local disabled people that is able to support people with the complex and overlapping problems they face. We often support people initially with a benefits/ housing or community care issue and then go on to provide support on learning, training, employment issues as well as linking people in with other disabled people and community activities.

We help carers that help people with all disabilities. So our services include help, advice, advocacy, raising grants holiday with or without a person they look after and several support groups for different types of carer e.g. older people, former carers support for up to 6-24 months after the person they cared for has passed away and to help them with things like employment, encouragement and support – also monthly health and relaxing days and we have a waiting list for this.

There are 48 places and they are full and reflect the surrounding community. The impact of this on the "working poor" is that we provide affordable childcare for the parents who are struggling in low paid jobs, in training or in education. It allows whole families to pursue a course of action to escape the poverty trap and seek work that will provide them with a living wage. The knock on affect of a single day place in a nursery can effect up to 6 adults way of determining employment in a ward of great need. We are very involved in drop-ins, childminders' projects and a variety of support groups for the parents.

3.2 Combating isolation

Many of the participants described the problems of Isolation. For them, it is not enough just to recognise the problem - action and activities are required to challenge the pervasive and destructive ill that isolation can cause.

Participants described how they responded to and challenged isolation. One such activity was *befriending*. Today, this can perhaps be seen as a rather old fashioned term and does not always fit easily into policy strategies looking toward 'new' or 'innovative' approaches. Yet there was much evidence that the simple act of introducing one individual to another who spends time encouraging, listening, carrying out tasks can have a profound effect, reintegrating a person into a social fabric. This type of help can turnaround a person's outlook and help people adapt to longer-term or irreversible problems, such as ill-health and build confidence to engage and access other services. In short, giving people the confidence to help themselves:

A lady in her 60's who suffers from arthritis had become housebound and had one daughter who worked full time who also had two children to look after, she was not getting help from anywhere else. Through the befriending scheme her confidence increased and she now goes to the lunch club and goes on trips to the caravan. She says she feels that she is 'part of the human race again.'

As with helping people to progress or change, it is worth noting the well documented economic benefits of early intervention into preventing isolation, such as a recent review of research findings into the importance of preventative work with older people and the role befriending can play in older people's well-being (Knapp, Perkins, 2010). In summarising practice implications for commissioners they state:

The importance of preventative measures to avert admissions to hospital or residential care underpins much health and social care policy. The research shows that befriending schemes have potential for savings through preventing loneliness and, in some cases, depression. Investing in such schemes at the local level may delay the need for more costly health and social care provision (Knapp and Perkins 2010: 2)

Again, volunteering plays a central role in the provision of these services. The following project described by a participant involved matching an individual volunteer to a family. One volunteer might support a number of children as well as a parent:

One volunteer is taking children out every fortnight for a positive activity outdoors. In the intervening weeks the volunteer works with all the family to clear their garden together. Since the mum in the example above has started to do gardening she has met a neighbour who has offered to jointly hire a skip.

The results from these weekly visits have been:

- *The children are more active.*
- *The family does things together.*
- *The parent has mental health problems and she now does gardening herself, which she finds therapeutic.*
- *The volunteer has identified that one of the children has difficulty with maths and is helping this child with their maths.*
- *The volunteer has enjoyed the work. This volunteer is not volunteering for a career related aim. (Many volunteers are volunteering because they want a career working with families but this volunteer is doing so for satisfaction and because she has employment that does not involve contact with people).*

Addressing some of the cultural, or experiential factors that may lead to isolation was also an area of work described by participants:

Elders, especially women, feel freer to use service because [it is] culturally sensitive. So [it] helps to prevent isolation and social exclusion. Women gain more confidence. [we can] provide other support e.g. advice on health eating, so people using service increase knowledge about healthy life styles.

The changes we make are that the person is happy in the end. For example, a woman whose husband got married secretly. She was depressed and very down and very down when she found out. Her husband took on a second wife with the Imman and just two or three others. She got very low esteem and she was feeling very bad. When she came to us, we empowered her, now she is feeling confident. We told her stories of other people going through the same. When you are not alone, you feel better. We advised her to get better education. She went on to learn English. We referred her for counselling with one of our advisors and ESOL (class). This happened over three months, because we have the experience of these cultures and communities and we know the borough we can do this work.

We had an Iraqi post-torture victim still suffering from the trauma, he was suicidal but he was helped through the befriending program. It's a constant learning process.

Breaking the cycle between isolation and ill-health was likewise an area of work:

D is a 54 year old woman who lives alone. She had a stroke in 2006, has asthma and also has angina. Her mobility problems worsened after a fall in which she hurt her back. A key worker had visited to see how she was doing. D has welcomed regular phone contact and has not needed a home visit as she is now very self sufficient.

Over the 35 years this project has been running we have tailored our services to client demands. Most of our work concentrating on getting people isolated through health problems out of their four walls. If isolation is not addressed people's confidence goes and their ill health can increase. We offer adult support services and recreational services, including a lunch club twice a week, we provide transport to bring people in who wouldn't be able to get their otherwise. Volunteers help out with the shopping, cooking, publicising and transport.

When people are isolated and cannot discuss taboo subjects, then community organisations can help break the silence:

We also help men by giving sexual health advice in open sessions. We raise awareness in all people who attend these workshops.

Open discussion over mental health is not talked about in these communities, but now we try to discuss it by running workshops. They will come to us because they trust our organisation and with us, they will open up.

3.3 Helping people access resources and support (removing the barriers to participation)

The issue of access generated many and varied examples of inequitable living. Whether this was lack of access to good quality open space, lack of technology and internet access. Lack of learning access, for example ESOL classes, was highlighted as a creator of disadvantage and further the issue of illiteracy in being able to speak but not write English. The lack of access to the physical environment was cited as an example of the activity one user-led group responded to:

We have lobbied tube passengers at Finsbury Park for step-free access at the station. We talked to a wide range of people and presented views to city hall and have now been promised step-free access at the station.

However in order to galvanise confidence, resources and skills to achieve this outcome this group had to ‘break down social isolation through networking and social events and training sessions.’

Simply helping people to build the confidence to access provision made within the wider community was the work of groups with knowledge of their own communities and their concerns:

We publicised an Information Day run by Children’s Centres. A Grandmother asked them whether it was okay to take grandchild to these centres – she thought it might not be, and lacked confidence to go. We encouraged and supported her to access this amenity.

Some of the voluntary groups who contributed to this document described their role of supporting young people to have a voice in order to challenge their own and others assumptions of how they can positively participate in the community. Many of the outcomes and impact they described were about raising confidence and self esteem to be involved and improve opportunities to participate and benefit from the programmes these groups were offering:

The differences made are slow and incremental help young people to live independently as young people as they move into adult life. They build self confidence and self esteem increase their skills. Some of the work is one to one other people need other kind of support. There are three special schools in Islington where these young people attend. Work related learning is provided to the young people and we supplement the statutory activities. This year we have a contract for school holiday activities collecting 6/ 7 young people from home using a mini bus this helps young people mix with other young people from other boroughs. We do this for six weeks in the summer and 3 half terms and Easter

The participation of young people in decision making processes is argued as instrumental for creating an understanding of the issues that are important to them thus enabling fairer access to voicing their opinions in places that matter (Brown, Lees and Young, 2009). Voluntary groups who do engage with young people talked about the methods they used to develop this participatory dialogue.

In the example of the TENS estate, research findings suggested that while there was some token involvement of young people in planning change especially in the recreational areas of the estates, there was a noticeable lack of recognition of the different age groups of young people and to this end some older young people in this research described how their recreational needs had not been catered for or had been recognised as different from younger children (Brown, Lees and Young, 2009). The authors recognise that young people welcomed their participation in decision making processes but it could have considered the differences in children and teenagers to be a more productive participation process. This experience is backed up by research which suggests that 'democratic behaviour is learnt through experience, so children must be given a voice in their communities so they will be able to, now and in the future, participate in civil society' (Malone 2001: 8). There were calls by some of the participants to revisit how children's services were arranged and funded.

Disability was another key area where breaking down the barriers to participation was felt to be particularly important. One participant added the key statistical information that:

Between 16-20% (up to 38,000 people) of Islington's population are disabled people as defined by the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. Disabled people include: people with physical impairments; people with learning difficulties/disabilities; people with Mental Health issues; people with long term health conditions or hidden impairments including cancer, HIV and cognitive impairments like Autism; Deaf people and people with visual impairments.

The following case study provides a compelling example of how understanding and addressing the issue of access and support at an individual level can change lives for the better:

[Organisation's name] were approached in 2007 by a young woman D looking for a way out of unemployment. She had approached other organisations for support and one suggested she contact us.

D had previously studied a design degree and had been in full-time employment. However at the time of contacting [organisation's name], she had been out of work for several years following an accident which left her with substantial mobility difficulties and pain management issues. She also has a number of other impairments, most notably a condition which has left her with restricted movement in her right hand and arm.

D describes feeling that she 'had lost control of her life' and didn't know where to turn for support. D wanted to explore the possibility of returning to study with a view to returning to work at a later time. D lives alone and had become quite isolated.

D saw a Personal Adviser at [organisation's name] (part of the 'Springboard Advice and Information Service) and started to explore her options in terms of both funding and the support available to disabled students. It took her another year before she would actually apply for a course but she has now almost completed a year of an MA in Design. Her contact with [organisation's name] helped her to focus on what was possible and gave her a structure on which to build her plans.

We also advised her that she could be entitled to additional DLA. She was at the time in receipt of the lower rate care component and the higher rate mobility component. We helped her with a review and referred her for specialist CAB advice for a subsequent appeal where she secured the middle rate care component increasing her income by nearly £30 a week. The whole process was very wearing and distressing for D and she would not have pursued her entitlement without our support.

D was also introduced to other opportunities at [organisation's name] like the Islington Disability Network and we also took her on as a volunteer receptionist as she felt this would increase her confidence and stamina before returning to study and we certainly felt she had a lot to offer [organisation's name]. D is also now a member of the Disability Reference Group, a group of local disabled people who help to scrutinise the council's progress on disability equality and has taken part with us in several consultations and service development work, most recently advising the council and architects on the redevelopment of Ironmonger Row Baths and the plans to make it a state of the art accessible venue. D was able to draw on her design background as well as her experiences as a disabled person often excluded by inaccessible leisure facilities.

We also became increasingly aware through conversations with D that she was finding it increasingly difficult to manage at home and that this could have a real impact on whether she could continue with her studies and her involvement with [organisation's name]. We explained to her that she might be entitled to community care services and supported her through the referral process. She now receives regular daily support with cleaning, shopping and food preparation and is currently working with our IBASS service to apply for a Personal budget so she can manage her own care needs.

In addition D knew where to turn when she needed financial support to purchase a new cooker and other white goods. We applied to local charities for funds, so what in the past might have seemed an insurmountable and frightening problem to a disabled person on a low income, a broken cooker, was dealt with speedily with limited inconvenience.

We believe our holistic approach and the range of services and opportunities we provide has meant we have been able to offer D much more than straight information and advice. We have also been able to support her when everything seemed too difficult to pursue, help her to become more confident and involved locally and most importantly help her to put her wealth of talents to good use. She is currently as we have mentioned studying for her MA and she continues to be involved with [organisation's name].

The following case study offered by one of the participants demonstrates how voluntary and community groups can link with each other, challenge and work with statutory services to improve underlying processes which were at best were unfair and ultimately endeavour to make life for a person experiencing multiple and complex challenges a little fairer in terms of accessing services and support to improve a situation of a person:

That P wasn't a named tenant on their south London council tenancy agreement and, therefore, would not be able to stay in their home was inconsequential. After the deaths of first his mother-in-law and then his partner six weeks later, P was struggling to cope with the loss of his family, partner and home as he knew it. He felt compelled to flee the area and try to make a fresh start.

In his late 50's and with significant health problems including diabetes, cataracts, respiratory and heart problems it was not going to be easy. He knew some people (more acquaintances than friends) in North London that may offer some support, so headed there. But it didn't work out, the anticipated support didn't transpire and it wasn't long before P found himself on the streets.

When the bitterly cold weather hit in February P was the grateful recipient of the [organisation name] emergency shelter provision for rough-sleepers that comes into operation after three consecutive nights of sub-zero temperatures. [organisation name] referred P to our project.

Shortly after leaving the shelter one Saturday morning he collapsed on the street and called 999 from his mobile when he wasn't getting any response from passers by. He was admitted to hospital and treated for suspected pneumonia. Despite instructions from the consultant for P to see a social worker to address his homelessness; despite legislation that a Community Care Assessment be conducted in these cases; despite the CICCWS Project Coordinator's personal visit to the hospital and request to be contacted with respect to his case prior to any potential discharge; and contrary to their own hospital and NHS policy; P arrived back at our shelter three days later clutching a large bag of various kinds of medication. He had been told he was discharged and had to leave the hospital immediately.

Even more alarmingly, within a week the same hospital contacted us urgently trying to track P down because he had tested positive for TB!

After making a formal complaint we are now working with key hospital staff to address the underlying issues that led to this and other flagrant failures of due process.

Meanwhile, [organisation's name] worked to find a shelter for P in a town with which he had an historical local connection and which has subsequently found him a place in a supported housing project in the same town.

Other groups explained the way they dealt with the multiple and inter-related problems of access to housing and social exclusion:

We are a small project who deal with homelessness and give broader help in the community to people who have been homeless in the past or are at risk of being homeless in the future. We provide a drop in Centre on a Sunday for 3 to 4 hours to which about 180 people come. They get a 2-course, nutritionally balanced lunch, the chance to relax and socialise, the chance to shower and there is a clothing store from which people can take what they need. We also provide an advice and resettlement services though one to one meetings with clients to help them find housing. We deal with people who have complex needs including addictions and mental health problems. People often find staying in hostels scary and we provide a night shelter, one night a week for three months during the winter. We offer benefits advice and will go to meetings and tribunals with clients. We offer a volunteer and training programme, which allows people to increase their skills and we provide employment placements. We also refer people to specialist health services.

An asylum seeker who is an ongoing client has family in temporary accommodation awaiting immigration status. The husband was refused status, mother bringing up disabled children by herself. Helped mother to access benefits, activities for the children and signposting to the right agencies. We also helped two boys into activities because mother was doing ESOL classes as children were very socially excluded.

Community centres are another route to helping people access resources and support and remove barriers to participation. One network of 12 centres supports over 950 people on a quarterly basis. The community centres are based on, or close by Islington's Super Output Areas. Their clients made the following comments:

"Coming here has been so helpful to me, I was beginning to feel I just didn't matter"

"If I don't go to [organisation's name] I just stay at home and watch the television and feel sad"

Other types of community resources that worked to break down access to participation were organisations such as libraries and voluntary groups work with those resources to encourage participation:

Many people have mental health problems and spend their day in the library who would otherwise be on the streets. Info, (signposts), helps access benefits, help plan the day, careers and employment. Human intermediary is important with use of the web, have one to one help for people and the computer centres for people on benefits. There are activities with under-5s, which give the value of reading and improved cultural function of the library. Other activities are undertaken to encourage children to read books, often for those who wouldn't read, e.g. summer book scheme, so there's a long term impact of enabling children and people to read and access information.

Access to appropriate resources can have a preventative role in supporting people to live independently for longer:

Older and disabled people have greater difficulty accessing the benefits of technology. We put technology experts at their service. We give people more options where possible we repair rather than replace the items.

People with deteriorating conditions use our service. We cover gas, electricity, plumbing appliances and locks. People say knowing the organisation is free is reassuring and allows them to live independently longer. Giving people the ability to have choices and dignity for example minor adaptations make a big difference a feeling of financial security for customers.

Clients are usually in hospital, but are ready to move into the community with wide-ranging support. Often a resident will say "I'll never be able to cook" we have a food group of 15 people who'll cook for each other with staff support and learn – or re-learn skills, build confidence and later then staff support is not needed. There are barriers to activities and involvement in the community, although it is generally an active group. For example, one client has agoraphobia so I attend some meetings for her (in her place). We encourage visitors too, also Islington Walks, some go to the Wildlife Trust and get involved in volunteering.

Sometimes it was access to appropriate benefits at the right time that prevented problems becoming worse:

E is a 81 year old female who suffered a stroke in 1995 and was referred by her son M, who helps care for her. He was informed of the project by their social worker who said we would be able to help with a claim for a Community Care Grant, as their washing machine had broken down. The key worker was successful in getting money for the washing machine they received a grant for £300.

We are known locally as an organisation that can help. It is hard to quantify but we help alleviate isolation, depression and health problems. We also help lift some of the burden off the immediate family. Statutory organisations have confidence that we will deliver the necessary services and that we can reach otherwise hard-to-reach clients. We have a good relationship with the Council, older people go to pieces if something goes wrong with their benefits and they appear to be in debt and we can help in this situation.

'Knowing your rights' training has enabled people to find help and support and a couple of people, for example, have been able to move into more accessible housing. Volunteer advocates have empowered each other and the speak-up training and negotiation skills training have been useful to individuals to (have their voice heard and improved negotiation skills). We have a steering group that keeps things going when there's no paid facilitator and we have a newsletter. We offer small, manageable sized groups training and confidence building sessions and information on disability living allowance and other benefits.

[Our organisation deals with] people who might not go to anyone else - so might not get advice needed – able to improve access to benefits and services. They learn about their entitlement, benefit take-up improves. Many are living in poor conditions – poor housing, poverty, etc – helps improve poor circumstances.

3.4 Getting the wider community involved (raising awareness and removing the barriers to participation)

Another key aspect of the work that groups and organisations undertake to address fairness in Islington was awareness raising of issues and getting the wider community involved, ensuring seldom heard people were made visible and their issues fed into strategic planning:

Raises local council's awareness of needs of Bangladeshi community – ensures that community isn't left out of decision taking etc. at the strategic level.

In summary, our actions; increased mental well-being, improved physical health, broken down barriers between social groups and improved cohesion, we have offered legal and welfare advice, taken the strain off NHS and other local authorities thereby saving public purse money. [Organisation's name] have also facilitated policy change through campaigning and raising awareness of difficulties affecting Islington's elderly community. [Organisation's name] in Islington has created many other positive knock-on effects which cannot be quantified. For example, improving family relationships by helping elderly people with depression and re-engaging them within the local community, this in turn makes them a happier family member.

Twenty to thirty different 'steering groups' created by [organisation's name] in Islington. This entails creating strategic partnerships and health partnerships with local authorities, organisations and charities.

Tellingly, some participants felt the visibility of their clients and/or their issues required far more awareness-raising and there was still work to do:

[Participant's name] was less sure how to answer this question. She said that she thought that the homeless were more or less invisible to the wider community.

Social exclusion was again an issue that participants addressed in their work, not only for individuals, but their families and the wider community:

The impact of this work is that families get respite, parents get a break and can do other things, Young people use the local amenities and the local community is helped to have an improved understanding of the issues to do with young people with learning disabilities. It also makes a difference to the families as the young people tell their families about the activities they have done.

Work across anyone who is socially excluded. We make links into residents meetings, which helps reduce anti-social behaviour and supports shop and town centres in dealing with anti-social behaviour. Regarding child poverty, support the community how to deal with their service users and supply business phone

number for advice. Housing - success based on feedback that although the service was only a pilot, but businesses wanted it back as an effective way to reduce problems.

A very interesting issue that participant's during the meeting raised, was how to address the disparity between rich and poor living in the borough in a positive, proactive fashion. The meeting identified that there were barriers to participation of the wealthy in Islington. Islington has resources. It has some of the wealthiest people living in some of the most expensive houses. These people experience a barrier to participation in their community.

There is intended isolation from their disadvantaged neighbours. These can be physical barriers like gated communities, or other types of barriers for example intentionally not seeing, avoiding not getting involved and there is unintended isolation not knowing because the living experience is so distant a certain amount of parallel living occurs whether it is the type of shops people use, the travel arrangements, the use of services and technology. People even live in different living time zones due to shift work.

Voluntary and community groups go some way to helping to remove barriers to participation from both the disadvantaged and the advantaged residents in Islington. In the example of this tenants residents association:

The gardening project has brought together home owners like lawyers plus tenants at community events. London orchard project supported this. We all keep an eye and make sure the young people are safe. We keep the place nice and calm down people during incidents.

Activities and actions generated by local community groups where people can share experiences and that also offers an improvement to the local physical environment is a regenerative attribute to disadvantaged areas. If it looks better it feels better an example of this type of activity is described below:

Our aim is to use empty business properties and bring them into use for community arts activities. We bring local people together with workshops to give people skills. We developed venues for community use that are free for meetings, rehearsal space.

People are pleased to have an interactive arts site in a run down area like Holloway and Archway. Making people happy to be where they live ...It provides income generating opportunities for local artists. We think it is a good example of enterprise and innovation for the local community. Engaging local artists in their local community and encouraging local people to think.

Building on the idea of corporate social responsibility and encouraging joint participation in activities is instrumental to developing improved connections. Perhaps 'Community Social Responsibility' could be the next campaign step?

Participants described how it would be good to broker people who were living in certain council tax bands with other residents. While direct appeals for money have their place there is more work to be done on community social responsibility.

The council and voluntary and community organisations could build approaches together. The role of local community and voluntary organisations may help with the removal of barriers to participation by wealthy people who live in Islington focusing on the local and creating opportunities for engagement, for example weekend and evening volunteering and community events. The council with voluntary and community groups could work together to actively market the role voluntary and community activity plays in the borough.

These options should be seen as complementing Islington Giving's campaign which aims to raise £3m and can distribute this over five years to voluntary and community groups who respond to Islington Giving's three areas of concern: Tackling Poverty, Confronting Isolation and Investing in Young people and are successful in their applications for funding.

3.5 Bringing in resources (for example, volunteers, money and skills)

One resource that the voluntary and community groups were very adept at brokering was the resource of volunteers. They encourage and bring in thousands of volunteers to support individuals who are isolated. The volunteer centre alone knows of 1,200 volunteers active in Islington in 2010. Through their work, voluntary groups, but also demonstrate an intimate working knowledge of the complex relationship between the needs that volunteers address and the needs of the volunteers themselves:

We help carers ability to continue caring and help overcome 'revolving door syndrome' (ie repeat hospital admissions because of breakdown of care). And this creates a big saving for the borough. If there isn't a service, as carers are already disadvantaged, for example, they are denied social interaction, having lack of information, no social life, sometimes they have to give up work and reduce incomes and they cannot build up their pension contribution, it means that more services would be needed for the cared for person but also more services for the carer as well e.g. mental health services. This has created huge savings to both Islington council and the NHS. Carers are vulnerable people and they need looking after, as are the people they look after.

In the [organisation's name] we are all volunteers. We meet monthly to talk about issues we can help with. There are 200 people on the estate and there is me and a lot of old experienced women who are very passionate who have lived in Islington for a long time. We run a book fair and we have fruit trees and we are developing a fruit and vegetable and herbs project – we have put in for funding for this. We have a newsletter printed and delivered in English to everyone and we include key telephone numbers like Tolpuddle police. We have a Christmas fair. We do shopping for older people and door knocking, checking they are ok. It could be potentially saving lives and we bring food in to people who might not otherwise be able to get out.

Successful experiences of contact with voluntary groups often lead ex-clients or paid staff to volunteer their time back to the organisation, this creating a virtuous circle of experience:

We've had positive feedback from guests, although some don't want to remember their time sleeping rough. Many come back to volunteer – we help them get involved in lots of ways.

We have a volunteering scheme, many are ex-users and have children. They move into study and get NVQs they get off benefits and into work. We have 100% success rate. Earning through employment.

Timebanks are also a particular method of sharing and exchanging resources:

L from Eritrea joined the Time Bank in 2004. She provided book-keeping support for a community centre. She won the Volunteer of the year Award last year. She had her kitchen re-decorated by Time Bank members, which she could not afford. She earned a computer from Time Bank hours. She needed the computer to learn accounting packages and improve her business English.

Time Banks have worked with an Asian elders group and linked them with young people. They do work as a group such as recycling and gardening. Sometimes group exchanges are preferable to one-to-one exchanges.

Time Banks make a difference to people's experience of community when they know somebody.

In Mildmay people have come together through Time Banks around growing food and new relationships have formed. A woman with a garden has been supported with tools and plants.

Time Banks are working with prisoners who donate credits to community organisations. The long term aim is that prisoners might build up credits that they can use when they come out of prison.

Organisations conversely described how they could save resources through the work and volunteering they did:

We also are fighting the housing association contractors' ridiculous fees. The group has saved poor people a lot of money by going over the invoices for everyone on the estate because we found out that we had been over charged and once invoiced twice which made the service charge very high. We have managed to maintain it at its current level and have got people reimbursed thousands.

3.6 Participating groups are experts

Voluntary groups have developed expert knowledge about communities, or have the capacity to work with people on a very individual basis, this leading to simple and effective interventions being successful where success might not otherwise be possible. The statutory sector also avails itself of these skills:

We build up examples from all the community to share to help people. We bring communities together. We network, for example Sylheti speakers in the community, particularly women. The service helped all in the community access to hospital is difficult so we go with members of the community to the hospital. It makes a difference to the client and the hospital staff who can get (diagnose) what they are suffering from. Then the hospital staff can help the person.

We also provide maternity translation services and female circumcision issues whereby we act as a diplomat between a hospital and the women as they have to be cut again.

A particular highlight: the RS205 is a list of the most entrenched rough sleepers in London – people that have had at least 50 unsuccessful outreach attempts. We have a personalisation approach – we ask what they want, and it has a 75% success rate. One of the people on the RS205 – C – had deteriorating health and never usually comes inside. By talking to him we found out he wanted a place without a letterbox and he was inside within two weeks.

We have also learnt of the years that big groups can be intimidating to people so we start off with small informal groups until people's confidence builds. Over time people become happier and more relaxed. We have 170 users and about 30 of them are using the befriending scheme at any one time.

Quite a few clients are working now, although there are benefit issues. One client, for example, has a 10 week placement at Waitrose which could lead to a job. Some clients need more support just to come downstairs because their motivation is still low. Others have gone off and done catering courses. There are three phases – first, just out of hospital, second self-catering and self-medicating, third is to ready to live in the community. The idea is to progress them through, but support depends on the individual and the phase. Some people do 'hide themselves'.

Specialist skills such as language were an obvious, but extremely important factor in the ability of groups and organisations reaching some of the borough's most disadvantaged people:

Able to give specialist advice in people's own/first language – this means that people better able to understand advice than if was delivered in English, so

better advice. People trust the service, and feel more confident about accessing it – so barriers to getting advice are removed.

Voluntary and community groups identify gaps and can share this information to develop joined up responses. In the example of risk assessment of homelessness in bereavement one group said:

We need to be a leading place of change. We want to build on our bereavement counselling service, which we worked with Voluntary Action Islington on the research side of things. We are now looking at intervention at the time of bereavement. Identifying risks and signposting. Risk assessment and prevention as well as ongoing support are the future.

Another organisation working with women who experience domestic violence described the changes in the demographics of people they were working with and the need to adapt accordingly. Sometimes this is really difficult as some of its clients have no recourse to public funds:

Having to respond to changing demographics and needs – increase in trafficked women, women that have no recourse to state funds and assistance.

We provide help to very vulnerable people, especially women, and will try to support those who have no recourse to state funding or assistance which is hard to do, and many centres do not do this (we make 2 out of 80 places available). We helped a woman who had fled to this country after violence in Congo. She had post traumatic stress, and formed an abusive relationship here, with a man who kept her prisoner in a house, until he dumped her in a park. We got her ESOL training, and gave her security to help rebuild her confidence.

Voluntary and community groups can also attract additional funds to the borough. The participants were not specifically asked how much they were able to contribute in a financial year, but one network of organisations described that through its joined-up approach to fundraising, it had brought over 3million pounds into the borough since the network began.

Using expert knowledge about a community's needs was sometimes used as a tool to influence policy and create better, more joined-up ways of working with other service providers in both the voluntary and statutory sectors:

[Organisation's name] is a local organisation run by and for disabled people, has a unique profile and reach amongst Islington's disabled communities and has enabled us to build up a wealth of knowledge about the needs, interests and aspirations of local disabled people. We use this knowledge, expertise and contact with local disabled people to develop and secure funding (much from outside the borough) for vital services and advise local service providers and decision makers on disability equality issues. We play an active role in wider

community and voluntary sector and are currently developing a consortium of local organisations called the Islington Consortium for Independent Living to develop better more joined up ways we can support and make choice and control a reality for local disabled people, carers and older people.

3.7 Participating groups are themselves vulnerable to unfairness

Some respondents went beyond the issues lack of access for people they worked with and considered their own or others organisations problems with lack of access to sustainable project funding and questioned whether small group funding was a fair process citing an example of only being able to apply once per year to community chest and grass roots grant. Others described how council partnership projects with voluntary groups are better funded than independent voluntary sector projects:

I have been working on the project for one year, although the project itself has been going for 25 years – the initial idea behind the project was to support families in temporary accommodation. We support all aspects of family life, and my role is to encourage good parenting. Our current funding is due to end in March 2011 and there is no room for renegotiation. That is it.

3.8 Radical ideas

The workshop group took 5 minutes to post 'radical ideas' on a board. Some of these offered opportunities for action, including ideas around strategy and policy changes. Some were directly addressing disparity in wealth. Others around the idea of the role and actions of government and what could be done at both a central and local level to address inequality. These ideas have here been loosely grouped under the following headings:

Activities - ideas for actions:

- Give the people with the power, authority and influence a personal experience of poverty and deprivation – share and learn.
- Training advocates to provide free universal advocacy services in Islington.
- Unemployed youth to do community work with older people in care homes or day centres.
- BME organisations should attend Fairness Commission meetings, they are disadvantaged groups.
- Provide framework and rewards to get kids running their own youth projects. They can do a range of tasks including recruiting, marketing, organising, providing volunteer stewards, book-keeping, report writing etc.
- Noise booths for young people to yell and shout in.

Strategy and policy - ideas for action:

- Small organisations should be commissioned to provide services.
- Matching residents in higher council tax bands with those in lower ones to be buddies or volunteers. Encourage the local community to support each other. Tax breaks for volunteering.
- Give leases to third sector organisations, e.g. Freightliners Farm, so they can apply for Lottery Heritage funds etc. Currently they are excluded, which is unfair.
- Better funding for schools and children's centres, and parenting classes / family learning.
- Outsource all youth work provision and set up a youth work trust so that all projects have level funding and are managed independent of the council.
- Fill empty rooms in nice homes! Council to guarantee.
- Exert power over greedy landlords – and keep working on it!
- Provide a voluntary sector strategy which will create and level playing field using equalities.
- Allow residents to stay in Islington if they want to, rather than sending them back to their original borough.

Income, tax and wealth – ideas for action:

- “Wage” swap.
- Guaranteed minimum family income based on identification of needs.
- Redistribution of wealth.
- Transfer of wealth from those with ‘too much’ to the people!
- Stop funding Personal Executive Assistants of managers in statutory organisations and allocate money to community groups and schools.
- No statutory sector staff paid over £40K.
- Tax breaks or something that encourages more support and cooperation from business and private property or resource holders.

Government – ideas for action:

- Optional extra council tax, e.g. options on how it will be spent – on biodiversity or youth clubs etc.
- No budget cuts.
- Councils working with the same organisations to have the same monitoring.
- Proportional representation.
- Government departments to directly fund voluntary organisations.

4.0 Conclusions

The report captures participants' lived experience of what is unfair in Islington. With first hand experience of living on Islington Estates, having a disability, having to learn about a system, being a refugee and volunteering and working in a voluntary or community organisation.

The process for achieving positive outcomes in the context of entrenched discrimination, lack of access to resources or the ongoing rationing of support to the most disadvantaged is slow and piecemeal. There is no rapid transformation or magic wand; groups were alive to the fact that challenging and attempting to suspend this inequality was a slow and ongoing process. While groups were not describing their intention to give up trying, they did say that achieving fair and sustainable support to continue their work would be welcomed.

The report describes some of the cross-cutting elements that participants pointed to which helped to unlock barriers to participation and moreover progress access to an improved set of circumstances for disadvantaged individuals.

The report summarises the types of activities and actions voluntary groups have undertaken to challenge and respond to the experiences of disadvantage and descriptions of the outcomes and impact of these actions and activities.

It can be concluded that local voluntary and community organisations play an extensive role in bringing resources, ideas and action to respond to the complex problems and disadvantages faced by Islington residents. They are able to identify as a result of working, volunteering and living with and in the context of deprivation.

The 41 groups represented in this report are not afraid to take part in helping to improve people's situations. They can also usefully break down the barriers to participation for both disadvantaged and advantaged residents through a variety of activities including volunteering.

Voluntary and community organisations can be supported to be more sustainable so that they can continue developing and honing their skills and experience which clearly contributes to improving the lives of Islington residents who are most disadvantaged.

We hope that in this first report this contribution is recognised and the recommendations made are discussed further.

5.0 Recommendations

- The Fairness Commission works with Voluntary Action Islington to ensure that voluntary and community groups are able to offer evidence in matters that have a direct relationship to the activities they do and actions they take.
- Voluntary and community groups are recognised as an investable structure that challenges and responds to inequality.
- Consider the transfer of funds from the statutory sector to voluntary and community groups much like a personal budget.
- Voluntary and community groups need to be recognised as a major supporter of the most seldom heard groups; they have an intimate knowledge and skill that they can share and as such need to be proactively invited to participate as decision makers.
- During this period there is great anxiety of how changes are going to impact on the work load and resourcing of voluntary and community organisations. Voluntary Action Islington urges the council leaders to consider the implications of not involving these smaller voluntary and community groups in future delivery plans that hope to tackle disadvantage.
- Create an optional voluntary and community levy for all working age council tax payers. This levy to be directly distributed to small groups working in the council tax payer's local neighbourhood.
- Help promote and market voluntary and community organisations to wealthier residents, for example, describe organisations' activities on council tax bills and other council communications.
- Develop the idea of voluntary organisations being the key to increasing participation of advantaged residents.
- Make the February meeting date of the Fairness Commission a place where more questions can be asked of voluntary and community groups about how they can be more involved in challenging disadvantage and making a fairer Islington.

These recommendations should be read in tandem with the 'radical ideas' that have been offered by participants.

6.0 References

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7.0 Appendix: List of organisations attending the meeting, or contributing material to the report

Organisation Name
Mobile Repair Service
Groundwork London
Solace Women's Aid
Scarabeus
Roundabout Drama Therapy and Movement
Action for Kids
Islington Carers Centre (2)
Community Service Volunteers
Islington Time Bank Network
Copenhagen Play & Youth Partnership
Finsbury Park Homeless Families Project (2)
Caris Islington
The Stuart Low Trust
Community Language Support Services
Islington Disability Network
Islington LINK
Union Chapel - Margins Project
Somali Human Hope
To and For
Age Concern Islington
Islington Childcare Trust
The Grove Residents Association
Islington Central Library
The Pilion Trust (2)
Finsbury and Clerkenwell Volunteers
NIA project
Prospex
Islington Bangladesh Association

Groups represented by a submission from the Octopus Network:

1. The Factory Youth Project and Children's Centre
2. Holloway Neighbourhood Group
3. Caxton House Community Centre
4. Hilldrop Community Association
5. Hornsey Lane Community Centre
6. Hanley Crouch Community Centre
7. St Luke's Community Centre
8. The Peel Centre
9. Whittington Park Community Centre
10. Elthorne Learning Centre
11. Mayville Community Centre
12. Manor Gardens Centre

Disability Action Islington also submitted evidence later.