

**People's Health Trust  
Annual Review 2021  
Celebrating 10 Years**

Over £121m raised over 10 years

Over 600,000 people supported

Over 3,200 projects supported

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## Welcome from our Chair

Welcome to this Annual Review of People's Health Trust. This is our tenth year of working with and supporting the neighbourhoods in England, Scotland and Wales that experience the greatest health inequalities.

I am very proud to join the Trust as its new chair just when its work, and the grant funding it provides, are needed more urgently than ever.

The pandemic has challenged all of us and has had a widespread impact on mental and physical health. Nowhere has this been shown more clearly than in the communities that face insecure and low income, poor housing and poor-quality environments. But we have also seen how strong community bonds, social connections and neighbourhood trust have helped people, sometimes through the worst times of their lives, when their worlds have turned upside down.

As our lives adjust to what seems to be a new normal, we continue to face an unprecedented and worsening crisis of health inequality. The gap has widened between the most and least affluent areas in how long we live and the state of our health through our lives. In England, almost two and a half times as many people in the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods died from COVID-19 as in the most affluent. In Scotland and Wales around twice as many. We might expect to see long COVID display a similar pattern, echoing the difference in long-term conditions like diabetes, asthma, heart conditions and Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD).

The pandemic has amplified many other inequalities. People of colour have been badly affected: people of African-Caribbean, Bangladeshi and Pakistani origin, in particular.

We have also seen disabled people, people with a learning disability and those with long term conditions very hard hit.

We truly hope that this creates a turning point for understanding and action on inequality in our society. We need to see decisive action and investment across all the areas that clearly impact on public health. People are needlessly suffering too many years in poor health and dying too early when narrowing health inequalities could prevent that.

People's Health Trust continues to focus on supporting the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods to bring about change. Over the last ten years it has provided grants to more than 3,200 projects reaching over 600,000 people. In these difficult times projects have provided a vital

lifeline to many of their communities and the people who are most vulnerable living within them.

We are proud that the work of local organisations supported by the Trust has been building social connections, community confidence and wellbeing. It is critical that we continue to invest in and build on these foundations.

A heartfelt thank you to everyone - all the organisations, staff and communities - who have worked tirelessly with us over the last ten years. This work is touching lives and helping people to feel that they can come together and make a difference to the things that matter in their lives.

A very warm thank you to The Health Lottery and everyone who supports this work by participating. They have generated a fantastic £121 million over the last 10 years to invest in the health and wellbeing of people living in communities who face tough challenges, but meet these by working together with determination.

Looking ahead, we plan to share the learning between communities about what they are achieving, and to reach out to find and support the communities tackling the causes, as well as the effects, of the health inequalities that touch their lives. Join us on that journey.

Jenny Edwards CBE

Chair, People's Health Trust

## Welcome from our Chief Executive

As we reach our ten-year anniversary, it is a bitter-sweet moment. Sweet because of the myriad of unique and creative approaches taken by communities to improve health. Bitter because inequalities continue to widen nationally and people continue to die younger than they need to and to live longer in poor health.

Although it's easy to see what still needs to change, it's also important to reflect on the fact that things have progressed. Across the last decade, through the more than 3,200 projects supported across England, Scotland and Wales, we have shone a light on the inequalities in health which blight ordinary lives - something which certainly was not talked about widely a decade ago.

Over £121m of funding has supported organisations to address the local systemic causes of poor health and early death, including poor housing, low paid jobs and poor income, lack of affordable food, extractive local economies and lack of green spaces to name but a few.

We have focused heavily on supporting all funded groups to build social connections, partly to combat the isolation epidemic, but also because it is only through people uniting that we see them being able to use their voices and change the systems around them. This review highlights that our independent evaluation clearly demonstrates that people feel more connected, more able to contribute to their neighbourhoods and have higher wellbeing than people in similarly disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

It has been moving, in a year of so much trauma, illness and death, to see projects supporting young people with no formal qualifications into their first jobs; to see people campaigning successfully for improved housing; to see older women from Black and minoritised ethnic communities being supported into work; to see LGBT+ communities creating safe spaces to meet; to see mental health support for young Jewish women and to see disabled people and parents fighting for greater access and rights for disabled people.

As we move into our new year and into the next era, we know there's much to do. We will continue our anti-oppression and anti-racism work to centre the voices of people who are marginalised and who experience significant and widening health inequalities. The gap between the richest and the poorest continues to widen and we must seize the opportunities which exist

around levelling up some of Great Britain's poor neighbourhoods and communities.

We will continue to work with national and local government and via health structures to support the changes which are critical to support good health and longer lives.

Our work would not be possible without The Health Lottery, whose support to address poor health in local communities has been tireless over the past decade. We are especially grateful to them for raising the amount of good causes we receive to 25.5%. This is directly supporting communities. We look forward to many more years working with them.

I would also like to pay tribute to an incredible staff team, voluntary Board (past and present) and unpaid committee advisers who have adapted and worked extremely hard. Critically, I would like to thank the volunteers and workers across England, Scotland and Wales who have worked above and beyond, particularly over the past 18 months, in supporting communities through crisis and trauma with skill, knowledge, love and laughter. We know the impact on the mental health of these volunteers and workers has been enormous and we will continue to fight for them to receive the kind of support and recognition they deserve.

John Hume

Chief Executive, People's Health Trust

## **What makes us healthy?**

Health inequalities are the unjust and avoidable differences in the length of people's lives and the quality of their health.

These differences are a social injustice. Health inequalities are caused by unequal access to power, money and resources. The things that make us healthy are known as the social determinants of health. Well-established evidence demonstrates that these factors affect our health more than behaviours, lifestyles or the health care system.

### **Social connections**

Strong social connections within and between communities play an important role in supporting good health and living longer lives. Stronger social connections can mean you become more confident, have increased skills, and a strong sense of purpose and hope, which we know are important first steps in being able to address other factors which affect health.

### **Community power**

People and communities need to have greater power over the decisions and actions that affect their lives in order to improve and maintain their health. Community power emerges when people come together to respond to a common concern or issue. Having more power over things that matter to us increases confidence and self-esteem which benefits our physical and mental health. It is also an important first step that can lead to change in other factors that affect our health. For example, residents might come together to identify shared concerns and influence their housing provider to improve their housing conditions, which also improves their health.

### **Jobs and income**

Having good working conditions, fair contractual conditions, and stable employment that pays at least the real Living Wage all have a big impact on our health. We all need good work, a level of control over our work and enough income to live healthily. People who are unemployed or in low-paid jobs are more likely to have physical and mental health issues, as well as lower self-esteem. The benefits system can help with income but benefit

sanctions can be particularly harmful to people's health. People with lower incomes are more likely to report their health as 'bad' or 'very bad'.

## **Local environment**

Our local environment is critical for our health and community. Having accessible green spaces, safe and well-lit roads, good public transport, shops, and good air quality supports people to make social connections, to access services, be physically active and stay healthy. There is huge inequality in access and proximity to green space and those living in the most disadvantaged areas have the least access. Studies have shown that on average, a 10% increase in exposure to green space translates into five years of better health.

## **Local economies**

The places in which we live have a huge impact on our health. This includes how money flows locally to ensure what is invested re-circulates and contributes to local community wealth building. A thriving local economy can include locally-owned community buildings and shops with affordable, healthy food, as well as access to quality jobs that pay at least the real Living Wage with opportunities to build skills. It also means that wealth is distributed more equitably within local communities. Areas including Preston and Wigan have shown that when local authorities work together with local organisations such as universities and hospitals, and with businesses and the voluntary sector, they ensure that the benefits of growth are invested in their local area and that local people are in control.

## **Housing**

The conditions in which we live have a big impact on our health. Problems with housing include physical problems such as damp, cold and overcrowding, as well as issues of instability, temporary accommodation, rising rent, and rising fuel costs. Housing issues often lead to people feeling powerless and isolated. High and rising costs and eviction fears have an impact on people's health and wellbeing, as well as preventing people from raising issues and speaking out.

## **Education and skills**

Education, skills and training are critical for people to develop supportive social connections, access good work, develop an interest in life-long learning and problem solving. They also help people feel empowered, valued and have control over their lives. There is a large body of evidence which strongly and consistently links education with health, even when other factors like income are taken into account.

Read more about what makes us healthy here -

[www.peopleshealthtrust.org.uk/impact/social-determinants-health](http://www.peopleshealthtrust.org.uk/impact/social-determinants-health)

# Stories from a decade

## Social connections case study

The Centre Place

LGBT+ Service Nottinghamshire

*“Simply having someone to open up to and speak freely with has been very helpful and allowed me confidence to express myself.” LGBT+ young person*

Having strong social connections in your local area is an important first step in tackling inequalities and advocating for change. Some people face a greater risk of isolation including people who identify as LGBT+ which can lead to poor mental and physical health.

The Centre Place, which has received funding from the Trust since 2017, offers one to one and group support for LGBT+ young people in Nottinghamshire. Their three support groups provide a safe and welcoming environment for project members to share their experiences, explore issues and form social connections.

Georgia Crossland, LGBT+ Specialist Social Worker explained: “A lot of LGBT+ young people are really socially isolated. When people first join our project some of them aren’t attending school, some are too anxious to socialise and a lot of people are quite shy. The centre is very youth-orientated and the young people have control over how it looks. We see the impact initially when people come into our building - they’re amazed and feel a lot more relaxed and eager to engage.

“Having a safe space for people to make friendships and share their experiences with others that can relate is a huge part of what we do. These friendships are often sustained outside of our centre with group chats, which are really important. Having that support system has helped many of our participants have the courage to re-enter education, voice their experiences and socialise with their peers.

“As well as providing a fun space to socialise, we also talk about specific issues impacting LGBT+ young people such as mental health problems and hate crime. The young people choose some of the topics we focus on and how we approach them. With hate crime we’re working with schools to provide training on dealing with homophobic and transphobic bullying.

Taking ownership over the project in this way is a real confidence boost and helps the members feel more confident in other aspects of their life as well.”

This project supports people from Mansfield, Worksop, Retford and Sutton-in-Ashfield, Nottinghamshire in the Health Lottery East Midlands area.

Grant amount £37,476

## Local environment case study

### Caia Park Partnership

#### Local Conversation in Caia Park

*“Improving our local area is just one part of what we do but it’s really important to the residents. The main thing is getting the community involved and supporting them to make changes.” Alice Williams, Youth Activities Worker*

The places we live have a huge impact on our health. It’s important for people to have equal access to green spaces, shops, and services. Living in an area that is unsafe or inaccessible can lead to greater inequality.

Caia Park is the largest housing estate in Wales and home to 12,500 people. Whilst a strong community has formed in the area over time, deprivation has continued to be an issue. Over the past year the added impacts of COVID-19 have widened existing inequalities and the area has seen a rise in food poverty and poor mental health.

The Local Conversation in Caia Park is centred on the understanding that local people know what barriers they face and the best way to tackle them. The project’s priorities, developed by a forum of local residents, are to work together to create a safe and environmentally-friendly local environment, engage more older and young people in the community, and tackle food poverty and mental health.

Improving the local environment is a key concern for residents who expressed wanting to feel safer on the estate. The Local Conversation has used a joined-up approach to make progress towards their wider priorities.

The forum has been successfully working with the local council to improve pavements, street lighting and lower rates of anti-social behaviour around drug dealing, use and discarded drug paraphernalia.

The Local Conversation recently launched a new mental health hub with the support of the Council and North East Wales Mind and Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board.

A partnership with local peer mentoring project Cyfle Cymru and the Salvation Army will enable them to offer support sessions for those with

substance misuse issues, in order to try to tackle the root cause of the drug paraphernalia litter and mental health problems.

Residents, including members of the Youth Forum and the men's group, have also been involved with the development and delivery of the area's Safer Streets project, which aims to help reduce local crime hotspots.

Other local partners supporting this work include Caia Park Environmental Group, the The Green Infrastructure Project, WCBC Housing Team and Community Payback. The Local Conversation project is supported by Caia Park Partnership, who the Trust has been working with and funding for nine years.

This project supports people from the Caia Park Estate, Wrexham, in the Health Lottery Wales area.

Grant amount £65,000 in 2020

## Housing case study

Aspire & Succeed

Local Conversation in Lozells

*“It takes up to nine months for housing applications to get assessed and if you make a mistake you have to resubmit which is one of the most unfair processes we have come across.” Shale Ahmed, Project Director*

Over the last seven years, residents in Lozells, Birmingham, have been working together to address local issues through their Local Conversation funded by the Trust.

Unaffordable and poor quality housing drives inequalities and impacts some groups who are already facing disproportionate disadvantages. Problems with housing such as overcrowding, damp and cold can lead to physical health conditions as well as poor mental health.

It is estimated that 8.5 million renters are experiencing stress or anxiety and a quarter have reported feeling physically ill or sick as a result of their housing.<sup>1</sup>

That is why at Lozells, housing is one of their key priorities. They have specific goals to alleviate the hardships faced by local families affected by tough welfare changes and empower residents to become peer leaders in their community.

During the pandemic, they supported over 100 new families with welfare advice and housing advocacy services. They also provide weekly advice surgeries, job and CV workshops, accredited courses, budgeting advice and housing workshops. The housing workshops have been particularly vital for residents.

In June 2020, 3,064 families in Birmingham were in temporary accommodation, 428 of them were in emergency Bed and Breakfast accommodation, and over 13,000 families were on the Council's Housing Register. The extent of the issue is evident in Lozells where many families are struggling to meet market rent.

Over the past year, project members have been campaigning for some of the 5,000 new homes in the Commonwealth Village nearby to become social

rent homes and for the Council to urgently build more social rent family homes in the area. Families in Lozells are now feeling more empowered and confident to secure good housing following training on how to fill out online housing applications alongside English as a second language classes.

They have been meeting with housing officers to gain insight into the housing application process and feed back on barriers that need to be removed. They have also delivered training sessions on online housing applications alongside English as a Second Language classes so families are more able to submit their own applications and in turn support others.

The Local Conversation is taking a whole-systems approach, working with partners and the local authority to address the wide-ranging housing issues affecting residents, alongside their other work prioritising employment, children and young people and the local environment.

This project supports people living in Lozells, Birmingham, in the Health Lottery West Midlands area.

Grant amount £95,000 in 2020

## Education and skills case study

Living Under One Sun

Welcome Women

*“We support women to become leaders in the community so they can pass on the skills they learn. One participant, who now teaches English classes for us has taught English to three generations of her family.” Leyla Laksari, Chief Executive Officer*

Access to good quality education and opportunities to enhance our skill sets impacts our ability to participate in social, economic and political life. As people build their skills they also build their confidence and have greater control over their lives.

The Trust first funded Living Under One Sun from 2014 to 2016. Current funding is for its Welcome Women Active Communities project for women of all ages, particularly aimed at older women, those from black and ethnic minority, refugee and migrant communities, and those experiencing social isolation or feeling bypassed by gentrification in the area.

Through accessing the Welcome Women project, participants are gaining important skills which are helping women find jobs, increase social connections in their community and boost their health.

Leyla Laksari, Chief Executive Officer, said: “Our project creates a link between services and aspirations, and draws on the existing skills and experiences of participants to support their growth. We work with people who have lived through trauma and are extremely resilient but need support to become more active in our community.

“Many project members worked in frontline roles during the pandemic. Without being able to access English classes and without basic skills such as using computers they wouldn’t have been able to do this.

“Our project has supported people to find employment and become financially independent which has a huge impact on health outcomes.

“We’ve provided support with skills like navigating and paying for public transport to attend jobs and access education. We also set up an initiative

where people could learn to cycle and repair bikes so they have more control over accessing the local area and services.

“People need to be supported to grow with time, space and resources. We make our classes family orientated or provide childcare so participants looking after children can also attend.

“The women we work with have so much to give and supporting them to learn these basic skills allows them to fully participate in the local community.”

This project supports people living in Tottenham, London in the Health Lottery London East area.

Grant amount £37,780

## Jobs and income case study

African Caribbean Community Association

Sunderland and South Tyneside Centre for People of African Heritage

*“When you experience discrimination in your job search and are out of work it has a negative impact on your mental health. We help people rebuild their confidence and take this positivity into job interviews.” Lucky Pemu, Project Worker*

The African Caribbean Community Association in Sunderland is supporting project participants to boost their skills and confidence as a path to increased employability.

Having access to secure employment that pays at least the real Living Wage is essential for people to meet their needs for a decent standard of living. Being unemployed or in low-paid, insecure work can lower self-esteem and confidence and is likely to have a negative impact on mental and physical health.

Some groups of people are more likely to experience unemployment and low pay, including people from black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds<sup>2</sup>, disabled people<sup>3</sup> and women<sup>4</sup>. Discrimination and structural racism in the workplace and wider society contributes to this inequality.

Project Worker, Lucky Pemy, explained: “If you don’t have a job, you don’t have a good income - but the impacts can be much broader than that. When you’re out of work you can lose confidence and start to withdraw from the community around you. When you don’t have confidence you’re less likely to socialise and take part in activities and it can overall have a negative impact on your mental health.

“We support our members to increase their employability through one-to-one peer support where people can learn digital and computer skills, how to apply for jobs online and how to prepare for an interview. We also offer a lot of volunteering opportunities and provide references based on the skills they’ve learnt.

“Boosting skills is important but the main way we support people into work is by boosting their confidence. When you volunteer with your peers, you get the opportunity to work in a group and learn from each other which

boosts your morale and you can then take this confidence into an interview or a workplace and show you're ready for the job.

“Our members are mainly from Black African descent and many have experienced discrimination in the workplace or when applying for jobs. This can knock your confidence and give you a defeated mindset. Here they can build themselves up amongst peers so they are ready to prove themselves in an interview. We've seen the impact of this with people moving into work, being more active volunteers, and offering support to their peers.”

This project supports people living in Sunderland, South Tyneside and surrounding towns, in the Health Lottery North East & Cumbria area.

Grant amount £40,000

## Community power case study

Cymunedau'n Ymlaen Môn Communities Forward

Local Conversation in Holyhead

*“We recognise the impact of inequalities on mental health and strive to support our communities to make a difference. Together with residents and the local council we are working to make a change.” Stephanie Pritchard, Local Conversation Project Manager*

Having greater power over the decisions that impact us helps to improve our lives and health outcomes. When communities form connections and work together on a common issue they have greater power and can achieve more change.

Over the past seven years, residents leading the Local Conversation in Holyhead, Anglesey have been working with local organisations to tackle priorities identified by the community, with the support of Cymunedau'n Ymlaen Môn Communities Forward.

Their priorities for 2020 - 2021 were to: empower young people and strengthen youth leadership; bring the town together through community events and ensure Holyhead's a happy place to live.

Since the lockdown restrictions began last March, many residents have experienced increased social isolation and anxiety brought on by the pandemic, which in turn has impacted their health.

For some the anxiety, uncertainty and isolation brought on by COVID-19 has been their first real encounter with mental health problems. Others who lived with a mental health condition previously have found their symptoms exacerbated by the pandemic.

As an emergency response, and part of their ongoing priority to ensure Holyhead is a happy place to live, they launched a campaign to deliver mental health training to 100 residents. It aims to equip people with the skills to identify potential signs of mental ill health to support both themselves and others.

The campaign has reached beyond the local community. Virginia Crosbie, MP for Ynys Môn, supported the campaign and called for compulsory mental

health training to be made available in workplaces nationally. Partnership work and empowering the local community to advocate for change has been fundamental in bringing about this campaign as part of their wellbeing priority.

Through partnerships, the project's Community Plan has become more sustainable and effective. Local mental health charity Mind Cymru has offered a free confidential advice service and the local authority has provided space for them to set up a wellbeing allotment. As well as aiming to improve wellbeing into the future, the project has provided essential support to individuals during the pandemic.

Member, Ellen Higgins, was supported to access vital services and combat social isolation.

“During COVID-19 having the Local Conversation was a life saver for me. They put on Zoom sessions, so people weren't isolated. When I couldn't get my prescription delivered the project officers picked it up for me.”

This project supports people living in Holyhead, Anglesey, in the Health Lottery Wales area.

Grant amount £30,000 in 2020

## Disability case study

Easthall Residents Association

Glenburn My Life My Choice Project

*“Being funded by People’s Health Trust has enabled us to grow and take on more staff, most of whom started as volunteers. The funding has really changed lives and helped us support people to really engage with the project and the community.” Andy Gilbert, Project Co-ordinator*

In the UK, 31 per cent of families with at least one disabled person are in poverty after housing costs, compared with 18 per cent of those without a disabled family member. Disabled people face huge barriers to equality in all aspects of life. They are much more likely to be isolated and have fewer meaningful social connections compared to non-disabled people.

Easthall Residents Association in Glasgow has received funding three times from People’s Health Trust using money raised through The Health Lottery over a period of eight years. An investment totalling £122,769 has been used to support people from some of the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods in Scotland through a programme of activities chosen by its members.

Andy Gilbert, Project Co-ordinator, explained: “Having investment from the Trust over a long period of time has meant that we’ve been able to create a sustained path to participation, leading to better health outcomes for people with additional needs in our community.

“We know that having a low income can have a drastic impact on health. It is usually even harder for disabled people to find secure, well-paid work than non-disabled people. Only 47 per cent of disabled people are employed in Scotland and the disability pay gap is the highest out of the entire UK at around 24 per cent.

“Removing these barriers is so important for people’s physical and mental wellbeing. People don’t want sympathy. They want empathy, support and opportunities. Our community hub is a space where they get this.

“Tackling the barriers to participation in social and economic life is essential for achieving health equity. The activities we run, such as the

cycling and cooking classes, are about much more than having fun, they help people to become more independent, take on new challenges and build confidence which can be transferred to other aspects of their life.

“We believe that community-driven initiatives are the best way to tackle local health inequalities. Through our project many disabled people have learned new skills, made social connections, become more involved with the wider community, grown in confidence, become volunteers, and moved into work.

“Community projects like ours go beyond what statutory services do. We use expertise, life experience and motivation from the community and make it a better and more inclusive place to live, work and play.”

This project supports people living in Easthall, Kildermorie, Glasgow, in the Health Lottery Scotland area.

Grant amount £24,719

## Mental health case study

Sunbeams London

COVID-Connect

*“Widespread stigma around mental health, lack of cultural awareness and barriers including language and limited internet access means that many people in our community won’t turn to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services for support.” Yenti Friedmann, Project Lead*

Poor mental health affects at least one in four people<sup>5</sup> in England and indicators show this is worsening due to the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>6</sup> Marginalised groups are more likely to be impacted by poor mental health including people on low-incomes and minoritised ethnic groups.

Sunbeams London provides emotional wellbeing support for Orthodox Jewish girls between the ages of 9 and 16, living in an area of Hackney, London, experiencing high levels of disadvantage. It has have seen this rise in mental health problems first-hand.

Yenti Friedmann, Project Lead said: “Our group mentoring project provides a safe space where young girls experiencing poor mental health can come and get support and learn techniques to become more confident about managing their emotional health and wellbeing. Our project is running at capacity supporting 60 young people.

“The demand for mental health support services has grown a lot over the course of the pandemic and unfortunately a lot of our project members are unable to get support through the healthcare system. We are the only community mentoring project providing mental health support to young girls from the Orthodox Jewish community in Hackney, but more resources are needed to reach everyone.

“As well as hosting group support sessions we also do a lot of influencing and collaboration building work. We’ve been working with local schools and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) to increase awareness about the specific needs of the Orthodox Jewish community and mental health.

“Stigma around mental health still exists in our community so some people are worried about seeking help. Having funding to lead a project for our community is beneficial as we understand the barriers people are already facing and how we can reach those who need support.

“Through our project people are learning new skills, forming social connections and our community is also becoming more empowered to seek changes that will benefit people’s health. We’re grateful to People’s Health Trust for providing funding for our project and we are already seeing great improvements in the girls we’re working with six months on.”

This project supports people living in the Stamford Hill area of Hackney, London, in the Health Lottery London East area.

Grant amount £15,940

## Support us

For the past ten years our work has been centred around the belief that people make change. The community response during the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted this more so than ever.

Your support goes a long way:

£2.50 funds one person to take part in activities for one week, which will prevent them feeling isolated. Even a few hours of taking part can significantly improve people's health and wellbeing.

Playing The Health Lottery helps us to fund thousands of projects across England, Scotland and Wales.

If you want to support us, click here -

[www.peopleshealthtrust.org.uk/news/news-stories/support-us](http://www.peopleshealthtrust.org.uk/news/news-stories/support-us)

## Lessons from a decade

*“The Trust is now building on this foundation of knowledge to develop our policy work around jobs and income, local economies, the local environment, housing, mental health and food insecurity.”*

Over the past decade, the Trust has learnt a huge amount about the importance of supporting neighbourhoods experiencing the highest levels of disadvantage. Communities have worked to develop their skills, wisdom and connections to help them build community power that has transformed lives and neighbourhoods.

All this has taken place within a challenging context - health inequalities have increased overall across Great Britain and are continuing to increase. This has also been a period when our funded partners have provided a critical role in sustaining communities and neighbourhoods. Their action has shone through in what has been a difficult time for many.

The networks they have created have been essential to their ability to withstand the impacts of the pandemic and many have even expanded their reach, with 78% of funded partners engaging new people. The Trust’s evidence has revealed that building social connections is essential to any work with neighbourhoods and communities experiencing disadvantage.

They not only provide a platform for building priorities and action, but also provide an important function in protecting people’s health. The impact of isolation is known to be as bad for your health as smoking 15 cigarettes a day.<sup>7</sup>

People living in poorer neighbourhoods with receding public services may experience stigma and be more likely to withdraw from social activity. So bringing people together in a safe environment is critical. 94% of participants in our Active Communities programme indicated they were making new connections and friends through the project.

What happens when you bring people together is even more important. Our funded partners have provided leadership as trusted members of the communities they work with. They have ensured that people’s voices are listened to and that their ideas direct activity and action. Community leaders often adopt an approach that allows people to shape projects and set priorities for action on things that matter to them.

We have learnt that this process of coming together and building community power requires patience. It takes time to build control when people are experiencing a lack of it in their lives. But when people have the chance to build connections and direct projects, it gives them confidence and the opportunity to build skills, knowledge and enhance the aspirations they have for themselves and the communities they are part of.

Across our programmes, people are experiencing much stronger outcomes in relation to social connectedness, trust, belonging and agency compared to the averages for similarly disadvantaged neighbourhoods and even national averages. They also feel a much greater sense of agency and willingness to get involved in local initiatives.

Working with evaluation partners such as New Economics Foundation, Leeds Beckett University and Ecorys UK has been critical in this journey and provided the robust evidence needed to persuade people of the benefits of this approach.

Our research which looked at nearly 3,000 responses over four years, from residents in our Local Conversations found:

- They are much more likely to agree that when people in the area get involved in their local community, they can really change the way the area is run (82% compared to 51% in similarly deprived areas and 54% in England as a whole)
- That people in their neighbourhood pull together to improve their neighbourhood (76%) - more than in similarly-deprived areas (47%), and in England as a whole (58%)
- They talk to their neighbours on most days (46%), significantly more than the England average (21%) and the average for similarly disadvantaged neighbourhoods (17%)

These outcomes have been achieved for some of the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods and communities that experience high levels of marginalisation including many Black and minoritised ethnic communities, disabled people, people with learning disabilities, LGBT+ groups, refugees and asylum seekers, and care and prison-leavers.

Through a process of priority-setting and partnership-building with local stakeholders, some of our funded partners have targeted specific social determinants of health to co-produce outcomes that directly impact people's health and wellbeing:

- Social connections - creating strong networks has transformed thousands of people's lives - offering a lifeline for many living in disadvantaged neighbourhoods and marginalised communities throughout the pandemic
- Control and agency - by building confidence and connections, people have built individual and collective control that has enabled them to make decisions about themselves and their neighbourhoods to improve health and wellbeing individually and collectively
- Housing - residents have taken community organising approaches to successfully build campaigns and commit landlords to providing better housing standards for thousands
- Transport - residents have advocated for better transport to reduce isolation and sustain social connections
- Jobs and income - projects have focused on developing employability skills for people further away from employment, alongside creating opportunities with local businesses
- Local environment - residents have prioritised making changes to their local environment from community gardening to reclaiming abandoned public spaces.

These achievements have taken place in an exceptionally difficult time. As emphasised in the Institute of Health Equity's report, Health Equity in England: The Marmot Review 10 Years On (<https://www.instituteofhealthequity.org/resources-reports/marmot-review-10-years-on>) which featured eight of the Trust's funded projects, health inequalities have increased. Life expectancy has stalled and even decreased for some groups, even before the pandemic took hold and exacerbated things further, with similar patterns seen in Wales and Scotland.<sup>8, 9</sup>

The Trust is now building on the foundation of knowledge we have gathered. We are committed to using this learning to influence national policy and that will make an even bigger difference to unjust and avoidable inequalities.

## Key moments from the last 10 years

- October 2011 - First Health Lottery draw takes place. The Trust awards its first grant to a local project.
- November 2012 - The Trust begins its work to support work and fair pay by becoming a Living Wage Employer.
- March 2014 - Trust practitioner networks launched providing critical space for over 200 community practitioners during uncertain times, shining a light on issues on the ground such as mental health of practitioners and shaping Trust policy.
- June 2015 - Living Wage funders scheme launched, supported by the Trust. This brings together Living Wage funders who have a total spending power of £1.9 billion and support their grantees to pay the real Living Wage.
- October 2015 - 2,000 local projects have been funded by the Trust.
- January 2017 - 400,000 people have been supported through Trust-funded projects.
- May 2018 - The Trust celebrates more than £100m having been raised for good causes through The Health Lottery.
- September 2018 - 93% of project participants strongly agreed that they were making new friends from the network they accessed through the project.
- April 2019 - 500,000 people have been supported by Trust-funded projects.
- September 2019 - 85% of participants in Active Communities projects funded said they had developed new skills and confidence.
- October 2020 - 57% of projects funded by the Trust were involved in meal delivery and 36% worked with foodbanks, supporting those with the greatest need during the pandemic.
- September 2021 46% of residents involved in Local Conversations say they talk to their neighbours most days significantly more than the England average (21%) and the average for similarly disadvantaged neighbourhoods (17%)
- October 2021 - The Trust marks ten-years - a decade of providing a sustainable income stream to local disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

## **Strategic progress**

We made significant progress against our objectives for the year, and at the same time we had to continually adapt and change as we learned how to operate safely and effectively under COVID-19.

We continued to fund local projects in the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods in Great Britain ensuring that projects received the support they needed to adapt to COVID 19.

We worked with funded partners as they adapted their approach and in some cases paused their work, and worked as an organisation to make sure that our own staff were supported and felt safe.

Key areas of progress were:

### **The Programme review**

We looked at our existing programmes and how we could support funded partners to make even more of an impact in their local neighbourhoods. Our funded partners gave us feedback on what they thought worked and what they wanted to see from us, and we have included that in the changes that will be implemented in 2022.

### **Policy and advocacy**

We also developed our policy and advocacy planning and action. This will help us to prioritise the focus of the Trust's work in the years ahead and we hope to influence policy makers and those with the power to create positive change more widely than we are currently able to.

### **Our networks**

One of the achievements we are most proud of is supporting funded partners to have the skills and confidence needed to effectively act on the social determinants of health, and at the same time provide them with safe spaces to share practice, learn and pass on their knowledge. The practitioner networks have provided this.

Our networks have been a critical space during these uncertain times and through them practitioners have been able to have a voice and shine a light on what is happening on the ground. This has uncovered important issues

for the Trust to influence on their behalf such as the mental health of practitioners themselves.

## Finance and governance

It has been an enormously challenging year for the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods across England, Scotland and Wales.

We are especially grateful to The Health Lottery for increasing the percentage of money we receive for good causes to 25.5%. This has made the most enormous difference to communities across Great Britain.

The Trust's current financial position is strong and it continues to provide funding for those communities where it is most needed through its funding programmes, and at the same time maintain strong reserves to allow it to support programmes in the future.

The organisation continues to be overseen by a Board of Trustees and two committees providing advice on finance, audit and operations, as well as strategic oversight on policy, research and advocacy.

We are working hard to increasingly ensure that the Trust's Board and staff team reflects the background of those it supports.

As a first stage in our work on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI), we have focussed on three key areas for the Board - increasing its racial diversity, increasing the age range to include younger Trustees, and increasing the number of disabled people. We have made a strong start.

As Trustees completed their term of office the recruitment of new trustees was targeted at groups underrepresented on the Board. As our work on EDI grows, we will continue to focus on the diversity of our board and staff teams. In the last financial year, five trustees and one external committee member has stood down.

We would like to thank them for their service to the Trust and communities we support.

We were delighted to welcome our newly-appointed trustees and our new Chair Jenny Edwards in March 2021.

## Organisations funded

Organisations we have funded during 2020 and 2021

- Activiteens
- Advice Support Knowledge Information
- Age Concern Upwell and Outwell Luncheon Club
- Artistic Spectrum Limited
- Asian Resource Centre of Croydon
- Aspire & Succeed
- Aspire Creating Communities
- AutismAble CIC
- Banooda Aid Foundation
- Barking & Dagenham Progress Project
- Batley Community Outreach Centre
- Be Free Young Carers
- Bingham and Magdalene Newsgroup
- Blackbird Leys Adventure Playground
- Blackburn with Darwen Healthy Living
- Breaking Barriers Building Bridges
- Brent Parent Carer Forum CIC
- Bristol Women's Voice Butterflies Club CIC
- Caia Park Partnership Ltd
- Central African Youth in Enfield (CAYE)
- ChAD (Choice for All Doncaster)
- Chalkhill Community Action
- Citizens UK Charity
- Clifftop Projects CIC
- Community Action On Dementia - Brent
- Community Action Suffolk (CAS)
- Community Asset Project Community Renewal Trust
- Cromer & District Men's Shed
- Croydon People First
- Cymer Afan Community Library
- Cymunedau'n Ymlaen Môn Communities Forward (Môn CF)
- DIAL South Essex
- Diverse Active CIC
- Diversity Matters North West
- Eagle Eye Enterprises Ltd

- Edberts House
- Education & Skills Development Group (ESDEG)
- Epic Partners
- Face Front Inclusive Theatre Limited
- Families and Friends affected by murder and suicide (FAMS)
- Far Flung Dance Theatre CIC
- Food & Education Enterprise CIC
- Friends of St Paul's Luxuriance
- Gallatown Gala & Community Group
- Gladiators Boxing Academy
- Good Companions
- Great Yarmouth & Gorleston Young Carers Project
- Greenock Morton Community Trust Ltd
- Hanseatic Union
- Highlights
- Honicknowle Commnet Ltd
- Honley Village Community Trust
- JAGS Foundation CIC
- Jamie McDonnell Fight For Good CIC
- Jazanne Arts CIC
- Justice Prince CIC
- Khalsa Youth Football Academy
- Lev Echod Cancer Care
- Leys Community Development Initiative
- Lighthouse - supporting women through stormy times
- Living Rent
- London Tigers Ltd
- Made By Mortals
- Make A Difference Entertainment (MADE)
- Manchester Congolese Organisation Ltd (MaCO)
- Many Minds
- Maymessy CIC
- MensCraft
- Merstham Community Facility Trust
- MHA Communities South Yorkshire and Bassetlaw
- Mindful Activities Yorkshire CIC
- Moving On (Inverclyde)
- Mums4aChange CIC
- Northern Corridor Community Volunteers

- Oasis Community Hub: North Bristol
- Offshoots East Midlands CIC
- OMG4U CIC
- One-to-One (Enfield)
- Open Minds Active Ltd
- Opening Doors
- Oxford City Farm
- Penparcau Community Forum Ltd
- Phantasmagoria CIC
- PlayPeace
- Plymouth Hope
- Plymouth Youth Sailing Club
- Polish Parent and Toddler Community Group
- Redbridge Education & Social Welfare Support Group (Awaaz - Voice of Women)
- Refugee Roots
- RIG Arts Ltd
- Roll Model Youth and Community Development CIC
- Royal Voluntary Service
- Savannah Development Foundation Ltd
- Scope
- SEND Project
- Shirehampton Community Action Forum
- Skills and Training Network
- Society Alive
- Stepping Out Theatre
- Sugar Stealers CIC
- Summerwood Lane Community Garden
- Sunbeams London Ltd
- Support U Ltd
- SV2G - St.Vincent & the Grenadines 2nd Generation
- SWAN (Supporting Women, Activities Network)
- Teen Action
- The Hill Community Development Trust
- The SONshine Club
- The Surrey Care Trust
- The Vale (known as Vale Community Association)
- The Vale of Leven Trust
- The Vine Community Centre Ltd

- the Voice cLoud CIC
- Thornton Lodge Action Group
- TIKVA
- Tools 4 Teens
- Touchbase Care CIC
- VIP Arts & Sports Academy
- West Itchen Community Trust
- Wigan & Leigh People First
- Willow Learning For Life Ltd CIC
- Willow Tree
- Windmill Community Gardens
- Wisbech Projects CIC
- Yaran Northwest CIC
- York Racial Equality Network

## Thank you

Thank you to everyone who has made our work possible over the past ten years.

Our funded partners have been at the forefront of the COVID-19 community response, offering vital support in their neighbourhoods.

They were able to do this thanks to your continued support.

A special thanks to players of The Health Lottery, helping to raise more than £120m so far.

Because of you, we've been able to support over 3,200 projects helping over 600,000 people across Great Britain.

In response to COVID-19, The Health Lottery increased the percentage of ticket sales that goes to good causes to 25.5%.

Thank you to The Health Lottery for providing a sustainable income stream over the last ten years and especially during this particularly difficult time for people facing increased levels of disadvantage.

People's Health Trust

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Thank you to Design Anatomy Ltd and Amelia Costley for their work on this Annual Review, and to all the photographers.

Some of the photographs in this Annual Review were taken before the Coronavirus pandemic.

Images represent projects we have funded over the last decade.

In all cases where photographs or quotes are not attributed, this is at the request of the contributor.

The Health Lottery scheme manages 12 Society Lotteries that operate in rotation and each represents a different geographical area of Great Britain. You can see the 12 areas here - [www.healthlottery.co.uk/about-us](http://www.healthlottery.co.uk/about-us)

People's Health Trust is an independent charity regulated by the charity commission and the office of the Scottish Regulator.

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## End notes

<sup>1</sup> Shelter, 2 million renters in England made ill by housing worries, 2019.

<sup>2</sup> Powell, A, Francis-Devine, B, Unemployment by ethnic background, 2021.

<sup>3</sup> Powell, A, Disabled people in employment, 2021.

<sup>4</sup> Gender pay gap in the UK: 2020, Office for National Statistics, 2020.

<sup>5</sup> Mind, How common are mental health problems, 2021.

<sup>6</sup> Louise Marshall, The Health Foundation, Emerging evidence on COVID-19's impact on mental health and health, 2020.

<sup>7</sup> Holt-Lunstad et al., The Potential Public Health Relevance of Social Isolation and Loneliness: Prevalence, Epidemiology, and Risk Factors, 2018.

<sup>8</sup> Health inequality and COVID-19 in Scotland, Scottish Parliament Information Centre, 2021.

<sup>9</sup> Protecting our Health: Our response in Wales to the first phase of COVID-19, Chief Medical Officer for Wales, Welsh Government, 2021.