

TOYNBEE  
HALL



# TOWER HAMLETS POVERTY REVIEW

OCTOBER 2021



# Table of Contents

Introduction	03
Methodology	04
Key Findings	06
Recommendations	17
Conclusion	26

# 1. Introduction

In May 2021 Toynbee Hall collaborated with low income residents of Tower Hamlets to identify the drivers of poverty and solutions for tackling them in Tower Hamlets.

Eleven peer researchers, with ages spanning nineteen to seventy, conducted Participatory Action Research with a focus on creating recommendations for practical changes which Tower Hamlets Borough Council could implement to make a difference to the lives of residents living on low incomes.

The peer researchers co-designed and analysed the research through four online workshops. In early June 2021, they also led three online workshops to gather community input with low income residents of Tower Hamlets aged between 18-81, of which:

- Almost a third had a household income of less than £1000 per month;
- Three out of four came from an ethnic minority background;
- 31% had a language other than English as their main language;
- Over half were social housing tenants.

In particular our research identified that more than any financial intervention, low-income residents prioritised strengthening the community and community building, believing that stronger links between residents, facilitated by community spaces and activities, was key to tackling poverty.

## 2. Methodology

To form our research team we drew from our network of over 40 trained peer researchers, as well as new people who had expressed an interest in joining a participatory research project. We co-produced our research with 11 peer researchers aged between 19–70 years old, who were all low income residents of Tower Hamlets from diverse backgrounds.

---

Through initial discussions across two sessions, our peer researchers highlighted some of the key barriers that they had faced to overcoming systemic poverty. Based on their knowledge of the community and information from existing evidence, they worked together with our staff team to create questions that would help participants explore these topics in-depth. During the project our peer researchers had two meetings with the council's Poverty Review Team to inform the project design and share ideas.

Due to time constraints on the project, it was determined that the best format would be a series of online workshops. Workshops were structured in three parts across two hours, with an aim to explore the selected themes in depth. First, a round of introductions were made, then staff gave a brief overview of the situation in the borough, the project and the PAR approach, before handing over to the peer researchers. Next, needs and solutions were explored with a focus on unmet

needs, especially in the areas of preventing poverty, increasing incomes, reducing costs, emergency support, wellbeing and life chances. Finally, the workshop focused explicitly on the Tackling Poverty strategy and specific ways in which the Council could improve its services.

Using their networks and those of Toynbee Hall, our peer researchers recruited 27 people aged 18-81 from low income households to participate in the workshops. Almost three quarters of participants (73%) had a household income of less than £1480 per month, and over half (58%) were social housing tenants. A little less than a fifth of participants (19%) were in full time work, and 62% of participants were on some form of benefit - the most common being Universal Credit and Housing Benefit. Many of our workshop attendees had caring responsibilities, with over a third (38%) of them in households with children under 18, most of which had 3



children. Additionally, 30% of participants were unpaid carers for someone with a long-term physical or mental health condition or illness.

Following the workshops, a voluntary survey was sent out to participants to gather any additional thoughts they had. Combined with emails and calls into staff, more than a third of workshop participants shared further reflections after the workshops which were incorporated into

our peer researcher analysis sessions. Peer researchers discussed the most common issues and solutions that were raised across the workshops and expanded on how some of the top recommendations might work. We summarise these findings and recommendations from peer researchers and participants in this report.



19%

In full-time work



38%

Parents



58%

Social housing



30%

Carers

### 3. Key Findings



#### Community Bonds

**Community building was the most important thing for low income residents:**

Over and above any other interventions, low income residents of Tower Hamlets wanted the council to help build stronger and more integrated communities, noting that the friendships that came from this helped boost confidence and combat isolation, enabled residents to find out more about what was going on in the borough through signposting and informal connections, and also allow the development of support networks to enable simple things like free childcare when going for a job interview.

“The one thing I would change about the local area is ... if there's a way of bringing everyone together so that we can all work together.”

“I've lived in this area, my kids have grown up in this area, my support network is on the Isle of Dogs. But I might have to move to the other side of Tower Hamlets, so I've completely lost my support network. I know it's not geographically that far. So they should be trying to build communities through strategy and policy rather than dilute community. There should be some sort of overlord who looks at how their policies are helping, because if you live in a good, strong community you can deal with a lot of things”

“I just hope it's [the workshop] on every week ... I don't see projects doing this ... I'd like to see projects like this every week or every two weeks or whatever, not just a one off because in that way it'll be going back to square one ... I would like them to have the funding as well.”

“I think sometimes you feel that they're just done to be done. It's like a tick box exercise. You know - We've gone to the community, we've done a workshop, they've said this, but we're just going to continue as we were anyway.”

“We need some effective people who can make a noise, make a fuss and make changes, and we need some leaders who can lead on the issues that you've brought up today.”

---

**Co-production across all areas:** Across all workshops participants remarked that they wanted more such workshops - run by those with lived experience - to take place in the future and at regular intervals. These were the first co-production workshops for many participants, and they found the opportunity of working with peer researchers, staff and the Tower Hamlets Council very empowering. In particular this approach was seen as a way of evaluating interventions carried out by the

council, and would allow for discussions outside of a limited purview to take place. Previous consultation meetings held by LBTH that participants attended were felt to be more of a tick box exercise than true collaboration – they want deeper connections with the work of LBTH and to feel like they have a direct influence on its priorities. Volunteering of this kind was also seen as a good way to make connections and develop skills which could help people in their career paths.

## Youth focused interventions

### **Removal of certain services has had a negative knock-on effect on young people:**

For instance, it was highlighted across multiple workshops that lack of investment in youth centres had placed extra burdens and restrictions on households living in overcrowded conditions, making it hard for people – especially during the pandemic – to pursue work as they lack room to focus, and making teenagers more vulnerable to crime as they went on the streets in the evening to have more space and not feel confined.

### **The lack of youth services and opportunities in the borough contributes to a negative perception of young people:**

Many residents felt that young people are seen as a problem rather than an asset to the borough, and that this stigmatisation of youth is exacerbated by the lack of facilities available to them. Participants wanted more places dedicated specifically for young people under 25 to socialise and learn skills. It was felt that a lot of the negative stereotypes around young people contributed to a greater lack of confidence and pushed some young people towards more antisocial behaviour.

“There’s too many kids that don’t have enough of anything, or a community to go to, or somewhere to go to if they don’t have their family that they can lean on.”







## Council requirements for local business collaborations

“You know all these big companies and I’m talking about Canary Wharf in particular ... maybe Tower Hamlets should say to them ‘look if you’re operating in our borough, you need to give a percentage of your corporate responsibility time or budget to initiatives within the borough ... when Canary Wharf was built the Canary Wharf Corporation was supposed to be plowing money back into community, into the Isle of Dogs community, and employing, you know, people from the community, taking people from the local schools as apprentices, etc.”

**The Council should be the first advocate for wealth to be kept within Tower Hamlets:** As part of tackling poverty, residents felt that the Council should push for more investment from businesses and organisations based in the borough for the benefit of local people. As part of this participants felt the Council should prioritise making links with organisations who have a community presence in the borough and who hire

local residents, and when it comes to outsourcing and procurement there should be preference given to those companies who have strong connections with the local population.

**A better deal with local employers needs to be made to enable people to work in the borough they live in:** Our participants felt strongly that there were too few opportunities for people who live

within the borough to work within the borough, and that more needed to be done to push for employers to offer apprenticeships, internships, work experience opportunities, and training to local residents on low incomes. As part of this drive participants felt the Council should also advocate for local wages to rise to match the London Living Wage to reduce the issue of working households remaining in poverty. Some residents highlighted racism and discrimination as factors preventing low-income people in Tower Hamlets accessing jobs, and felt that advocacy by the Council on this issue could help improve the situation.



---

“I think there are lots of jobs available out there. I think the main problem is that wages don't match the cost of living. My husband earns less now than he did 20 years ago for the same job and the cost of living has gone up ... if you're working, you should be able to pay for your cost of living surely? ... the money I get from tax credits and my husband's wage - that tells me what the government thinks my family should be earning to just maintain a standard of living. But why isn't my husband's company paying him that money? Cause he works enough hours to get that money. So that's the problem. And until there's a political will to tell these companies that they need to be paying more we're stuck with a system where a lot of people have to rely on tax credits.”

## Access to spaces and activities

“Access to green space - like some of the parks that we have, like, they have quite a lot of litter or rodent issues. And again, what I said earlier, I think having a way that people on low income wouldn't have to pay a fortune to access, like sports facilities particularly like swimming and gym.”

“Our parks around here have been claimed by drug dealers.”

“I was thinking, you know, doing more outdoor activities, not staying home ... I think you know the gym should be free for everyone to be honest. ... exercise is a big thing in the community because for people to do exercise it actually helps them, you know like, mentally, physically, every way.”

---

### **Access to spaces and affordable physical activities need to be available to residents:**

Another common theme across workshops was that for many low-income residents their financial situation proved a barrier for accessing spaces to pursue physical activities. Gyms, swimming pools and clubs all had costs that were often too high to justify regular use, leading to a decline in physical movement, especially during periods of bad weather. Developing spaces in the borough and creating funding for people to pursue enjoyable activities, such as meditation or yoga, or work out was seen as important for maintaining a positive

emotional well-being as well as a physical one. Toynbee Hall's Pandemic Stories and Safer Homes projects echo this finding - both projects identified the need for clear communication on what public spaces are available for communities, who can access them and how to gain access. There could also be potential to improve this issue along with the community wealth building initiatives such as co-operative-led models and local recruitment.

## Signposting and council support

“We’re saying we care about poverty, but at the same time the services that are now available, they’re not affordable. So not every service is now free anymore - youth services have had massive cuts and people can’t pay. Naturally they are going to keep themselves isolated, they’re not going to be aware of services available to them because everything comes at a cost.”

“I’ve heard many people say that these benefits exist, but they seem to find great difficulty applying for them. They know they exist, and my daughter has an autistic son and he goes - he tries to - go to college, and it’s costing her fortune to send him to an appropriate one and she’s spending something like £30 pounds a week on fares. Now he’s entitled to free fares but she said it’s almost impossible to get it. There are so many forms to fill in, so many hoops to jump through that she just gives up in the end. And I think this is what happens with many benefits.”

“People don’t actually know where to go for help at the moment. ... Sometimes it’s a language barrier, sometimes they’re not understanding where to go - you know, you have to really break it down sometimes even if they can read and write.”

“It took me a while to actually come to the realization that just because I’ve got more than others doesn’t mean I’m well off and rich ... I always denied anybody offering support ... I realised, you know what, I need to take advantage because there are times when I have to say no to my children too often.”

---

**Negative view of the council:** People felt more positive about actual council services once they had received them, but when it came to accessing them or getting help from the council it was very difficult. In particular, many people felt like there were very long wait times to speak with someone. Once on the line, people felt they were being bounced around and having to retell your story multiple times to different people was a common experience. As one respondent said regarding council services, it was “difficult to access the information initially. If (you)

have a query, (it is) impossible to speak to someone”. The time it took to process claims was also a key factor in negative perceptions as between work, childcare, and other caring responsibilities, people didn’t have the energy to constantly follow up. According to the participants, this has led to people becoming disillusioned and feeling like there might be a hidden agenda with the council to prioritise saving money over helping them.



**Complex application processes are a significant barrier to people getting help:**

Throughout the workshop process many participants highlighted that complex and confusing forms, particularly those online, prevented them and those they knew from getting what they were entitled to, and that often the information requirements were disproportionate to the potential gain. As one resident noted, “in return for filling out loads of forms we don't get much at all”. This finding is reinforced with insights from Toynbee Hall's advice services, who note they regularly see clients who are eligible for council tax reductions but aren't claiming it, with the digital application process being seen as a barrier. It should also be noted that some residents saw this as further evidence for the perception that the council was opposed to supporting people on low incomes.

**Poor signposting prevents people from being aware of what they are entitled to:**

Residents consistently noted that it was often only through informal networks that they had been able to find resources and help from the council. In some instances people relied on knowing someone who could provide them with a direct contact at the council rather than going through the council's own helpline. The role of in-person social prescribers in organisations such as the Bromley By Bow Centre were highlighted as something that should be emulated across the borough.

**Vulnerable people are consistently missed:** Residents highlighted that one of the key issues that faced them was finding they were ineligible for certain kinds of support despite being on low incomes. In particular

“It's not in their interest to help you is it? I'm almost sure that they have, they have targets in there. You know like the council tax support line has a target of how many people to not help.”

this was common with "working poor" families who could just about afford basics, or workers who were self-employed as gig economy workers and had fluctuating incomes that were often lower than the minimum income floor. One participant shared how signposting to

council help in her school was only passed on to those families who are eligible for the pupil premium, meaning that many families missed out on essential support during the pandemic.

---

## Other key findings

"Anybody who needs support for their diet and things - and there are people who I have seen and I'm one of them who needs specialist support with regards to the diet and things - and it's just not there."

"People just take a property and then realize actually there's a service charge, you know there's other costs to put up ... And from the onset we've failed those families as the result of forcing them to take these homes."

"It affects children as they grow up. You know if they're, if they're living in overcrowded housing. I've got a 16 year old who's doing GCSEs, who shares a room with his 12 year old sister, and his eight year old brother. So it affects him going forward."

"We know people are struggling for internet and WiFi, you know, is there a shared cost that could be looked at depending on, you know, the location?"

"Those who have language barriers, they will have confidence issues."

“Well they have the Idea Store where you can go and use computers on the internet. They've got it there for people to use I think it's just not everyone wants to maybe go out of their home to go to the Idea Store to use the internet”

“The internet, or the phones for example, it is constant machines - push this button, push that button, but those options are not mine, not suitable for me. And would you believe the amount of time, if you haven't searched for an option they hang up on you.”

---

**Several residents felt that affordable, healthy eating should be a focus for maintaining wellbeing in the borough:**

Whether by improving access to healthy food, increasing education around healthy eating, or providing free community cooking classes, it was widely agreed that interventions are needed in this area. Some called for nutrition classes led by the council. Others favoured linking up learning about healthy eating and cooking, with building relationships with their neighbours, and wanted to see residents lead community cooking.

**Overcrowded and unaffordable housing is a huge detriment to residents' quality of life with strong knock-on effects:** The issue of overcrowded and unaffordable housing was one which many participants felt had negatively affected them in multiple ways. One of the most common issues - especially during the pandemic - was that participants had been unable to pursue other opportunities such as part

time work due to the lack of space at home to work. Furthermore, many residents related stories of having teenage children move out or wanting to move out at 16 or 18 as there simply wasn't the space to accommodate them and their needs, which in turn led to having to support another precarious household over time. As one parent noted “...all I keep saying is well wait till eighteen and see what you can afford ... it has such a knock on effect”. Having the Council focus on organising larger homes where children could stay into adulthood was seen as preferable, both in terms of ensuring a better financial future for young people in the borough, but also in terms of freeing up smaller properties that those teenagers would have originally sought to move into.

**Digital exclusion is more than a lack of digital skills:** Along with lack of digital literacy, poor internet access, limited devices, and the fact that many low

income households used mobile data or pay as you go internet limited the time they could be online. Households in overcrowded accommodation prioritized schooling and work for computer use, meaning that looking for services online was difficult and of low priority.

**Stigma and lack of confidence are also barriers:** Many participants highlighted how issues compound when a low-income family faces a crisis. People feel unable to access help without shame, find it difficult to share that they are struggling, lose confidence in themselves, and many also experience worsening mental health as a result. Consequently a more holistic approach was seen as necessary by our participants, with a focus on integrating signposting and services into atypical places such as festivals to remove the barriers that stigma may create for someone going to a traditional support location. On top of this residents felt it was important to make sure that people who sought financial support were also given holistic wellbeing checks, since financial stress also creates wider mental and physical stress. Peer mentoring was also mentioned as an offer that would be useful in helping families and individuals who are struggling to unburden themselves of that shame.



## 4. Recommendations

### Developing a new form of community hubs that are explicitly lead by the Council

Across all workshops residents highlighted that they wanted community hubs where they could socialise, take part in activities, receive signposting and support services, and support and evaluate the council's decision making. There is a broad network of long-established community centres, Idea Stores and organisations, but what residents were calling for are community hubs which combine all these above functions. For example, they suggested turning the Idea Stores into a community hub by bringing in other services and having more social activities.

In particular it was seen as important for this initiative to be led by the Council to help cultivate more trust with the community, and act as a physical reminder that the LBTH has a commitment to residents.

#### **Additional desirable specifications for these community hubs include:**

- Multi-use area with a mix of sofas and workspaces where people can come to have coffee mornings, or do small training sessions/courses;
- A programme of activities - residents wanted a place for learning, meeting and education. Resident-led classes, cooking clubs, and other ways of sharing skills were all suggested.
- Social prescribers located within the hub to help people navigate accessing help for whatever issue they are facing;
- Residents can meet with policy makers in this space to support decision-making and evaluate the council's interventions;
- Jointly run with residents with a view to training volunteers (especially in signposting) and empowering local decision-making;
- Explicitly multi-cultural and designed to celebrate the cultural diversity of Tower Hamlets (Made in Hackney was raised as an example of a community organisation doing this well);
- Partial funding for the hubs could be achieved through renting halls and rooms out for functions;
- One proposed location for this community hub was as part of the new Town Hall to demonstrate that the community is at the heart of the Council's thinking.



## Clear pledges, evaluations, and entitlements shared with all households

As part of rebuilding trust in the community and communicating what support is available, the Council should share with residents what they are working on in terms of improving wellbeing and tackling poverty in the borough and how they would like residents to help them in the evaluation of these proposals. This information should be shared physically rather than only digitally to ensure all residents are able to receive them.

### **This information-sharing should include:**

- What the council is planning to do in the coming year;
- How the council is planning to evaluate their progress and how residents could get involved;
- What council support is available for low-income residents, who qualifies, and how people can access that support;
- A list of other organisations in the borough where people can go for support including for mental health support and financial education, and;
- In future versions there should also be a reflection section discussing the evaluation of the previous year's commitments.

We recommend that the council host monthly workshops with residents to discuss the above. This can be delivered through sounding boards and community hubs.

## Activity vouchers for under 18s

One of the key areas which participants (both those with and without children) highlighted as important was to ensure that children in low-income families were able to participate in the same activity clubs as wealthier children, as well as have the opportunity to explore which activities they might enjoy. This was felt to be important for both improving community cohesion and ensuring that children developed into well-rounded individuals. To avoid excluding working poor families it was proposed that this could be organised as a voucher for a specific amount that was provided to all state school children in the borough that could be used to either try out a range of classes or clubs or to put towards funding participation in one activity that a child could be involved with throughout the year. It was also suggested that council-run activities should be organised on a “pay what you can afford” tariff, with the aim that higher income families could opt to cover the costs of lower-income ones.



## Youth clubs tied with training opportunities

As part of further developing space in Tower Hamlets for young people, co-designed youth clubs were seen as something essential to providing children and young people in overcrowded housing a safe place to go, as well as showing that the community feels positively towards them. It was important to our peer researchers that these youth clubs and activities should not be restricted only to children from particular backgrounds, but be genuine cross-community hubs.

### Recommendations include:

- Youth clubs should go beyond just after-school activities and instead also be a place to develop skills and make young people feel valued by the community. One good practice example project suggested was We are Spotlight, which teaches bicycle maintenance and repair, and supports young people to engage with each other and with the community;
- Activities and the organisation of youth clubs should be designed in collaboration with young people by working with schools and colleges in the borough, with a particular focus on young people who have been - or are at risk of - being excluded. There should be funding to support these youth clubs to co-design how they are organised and what they offer;
- Unused buildings and spaces that already exist in Tower Hamlets should be utilised and developed in collaboration with young people so they feel engaged and connected with the project;
- Within the project there should be opportunities for cross-generational mixing to tackle the stigma against young people.



## Community Wealth Building

The council should explore and adopt the approach of community wealth building which has been implemented in some other regions and authorities. We welcome the council's initiatives on procurement and social values, but we recommend that the council also has an opportunity to use its levers of influence to create a new economic infrastructure with anchor institutions and business, and sign large businesses up to set quotas of employment opportunities for local people, as well as encouraging the use of local providers for cleaning, catering and maintenance services. Participants agreed that large companies that operate in Tower Hamlets need to invest money and provide training opportunities so people who live in the borough can work in the borough. Residents felt that the council should prioritise local organisations when choosing who to work with (outsourcing was seen to have exacerbated the issues with accessing support).

**Collaboration and funding from the council should be dependent on the following:**

- Ensuring all workers for an organisation, including subcontractors and those on self-employed terms, are paid the London Living Wage;
- Providing work experience schemes for young people in Tower Hamlets, and where possible implementing paid apprenticeship or internship schemes.



## A transition fund for local residents moving from benefits into work

One of the key issues for local residents who wanted to work but felt unable to was the loss of particular free services such as eyesight tests, NHS prescriptions, and free school meals. The strict cut-off for these services made residents feel like pursuing part-time jobs for their own wellbeing would be at the detriment to others in their household. Participants proposed that the council could implement a transition fund, enabling local households previously on benefits to be covered for a period of around a year to support them with these specific issues. As one resident noted, “little things build up – the small things that don’t seem a lot make a big difference”.

**Items covered by the fund are suggested to include:**

- Schooling costs such as uniforms, transport, and school meals;
- Medical costs such as prescriptions and eye tests.



## Community gardens



Green spaces are another area essential to maintaining the well-being of low-income households. Many participants highlighted that their nearest green spaces often have issues with drugs and/or litter, and that they were eager to have a place where they could be creative, learn more about gardening and food production, as well as socialise. This is also a finding highlighted in Toynbee Hall's Safer Homes Participatory Action Research project. Peer researchers noted that this green space could be on a roof of a council building or part of reclaimed land, and could be multiple small locations rather than a single large one.

### Such spaces were proposed to include:

- Allotment spaces at reduced rates where people could grow their own food;
- A small space where families could go and learn about cooking and make different things each month depending on what was in season;
- A way to organise skill sharing so the residents could pass on their gardening, wood carving, or other outdoor activity knowledge to interested people.



## Improved signposting & funding for home liaison officers in schools

One of the key locations highlighted in workshops for sharing information were schools. Many parents emphasised the huge benefits of the home liaison officers who are familiar with the families and the micro-community around the school, but noted that these positions are currently funded by schools directly and are the first to get cut when savings need to be made. This finding is echoed by our Poverty Proofing project at seven schools in Tower Hamlets. The workshop participants suggested that a commitment to co-funding or funding entirely these positions would enable families to have direct face-to-face support in navigating and accessing help.

**Additional signposting ideas on top of the community hub, home liaison officers, and household information packs include:**



- A council-funded peer mentoring service for people who would like help navigating the borough, especially new residents to Tower Hamlets;
- A unified council helpline where rather than being bounced from department to department, those on the telephone would be able to deal neatly with all enquiries and suggest additional support someone may be entitled to. We welcome the council's initiative of developing a single-access helpline. If possible such a system would ideally enable residents to have a designated "signposter" they could follow up with if they needed to call again.

## Other ideas

Alongside the above recommendations there were other smaller suggestions that the Council may want to review and develop over time.

### Additional recommendations were:

- A community festival celebrating the cultural diversity of Tower Hamlets whilst also hosting stalls which could signpost residents to the appropriate help they require;
- Free WiFi spots in low-income wards to help residents access online resources (Toynbee Hall's Pandemic Stories project suggested that a similar solution could be a shared data package for residents in an area, to be organised by housing associations and the council);
- A pool of funding to cover the cost of an internet-enabled device for low-income households;
- More outdoor gym facilities and other free activities for people to maintain their physical well-being;
- Council lobbying for more powers to regulate landlords at a local level;
- A review of the housing waiting list to ensure that people on it still require housing;
- Transportation funding for employed residents on low-incomes who work outside the borough;
- Access to affordable healthy food, education around healthy eating and nutrition, and community cooking activities led by residents;
- Universal services which provide holistic support in non-traditional support locations; and
- A council-funded peer mentoring service to support people develop confidence and skills, and help navigate information. We welcome the Workpath initiative which provides such support and we recommend that peer mentoring should be available for a larger number of residents.

## 5. Conclusion



Overall low-income residents in Tower Hamlets wanted the Council to support them in the process of community building and preferred taking a holistic approach to tackling poverty over basic financial transactions. For residents the largest barriers brought about by poverty were limited options for improving wellbeing and combating isolation.

Trust in the Council is currently quite low, partially brought about by negative experiences people have had trying to find and access support. Residents felt that giving them greater involvement in the direction of the Council and creating true co-produced solutions would go a long way to repairing some of the damage. Both participants and peer researchers were keenly aware of the limitations of the funding and powers that the Council has but highlighted the perceived lack of transparency as something that prevented people from believing that difficult decisions had been made with good intentions. As part of the recommendations, clear public commitments to residents - whether through a community hub located in the heart of Council decision-making or a

yearly household newsletter outlining the specific interventions the Council is planning - are vital for the Council to enact.

More than anything residents want to be and feel empowered to take charge of their own communities, being involved in the creation and auditing of solutions to tackle the issues of poverty. True collaboration should be at the centre of the Council's strategy priorities going forward, with emphasis on becoming a vocal advocate for local community building. Creating these opportunities for genuine co-production will create greater trust in the Council's intentions and thus greater engagement with services and activities; in turn, this will also lead to significantly better outcomes for LBTH's Tackling Poverty (Together!) strategy.





## About Toynbee Hall:

Based in the East End of London since 1884, Toynbee Hall works with the local community and a wide range of partners to shape a fairer and happier future. We offer high quality advice and support, and engage with communities to have a more meaningful say over the things that affect them and shape platforms for social change.

The Research and Policy Team at Toynbee Hall aim to identify systemic failures which create exclusion and hardship, whether from public policy, legislation, regulation, service or product design, or any form of cultural influence. We ensure that people affected by those failures are involved in designing solutions through connecting Experts by Experience and Peer Researchers to decision-makers and innovators, and supporting them to influence effectively for change.

## Research Group (in alphabetical order):

### Peer Researchers

Aneita Lewis, Angela Dietrich, Anwar Miah, Fawzia Begum, Nabachwa Luyimbo-Lule, Naima Ahmed, Nasrat Tania, Rahima Akhter, Rothna Begum, Sheikh Uddin, Silvia Corrias, Yesmin Begum.

### Toynbee Hall Staff

Hiba Adan, Kamrul Islam, Oisin Sweeney, Rushaa Louise Hamid, Dr Xia Lin.

## Contact

### Toynbee Hall

28 Commercial Street

London, E1 6LS

Registered Charity No. 211850

[www.toynbeehall.org.uk](http://www.toynbeehall.org.uk) 

[research@toynbeehall.org.uk](mailto:research@toynbeehall.org.uk) 

@ToynbeeHall 