



## Connect Hackney: Ageing Better

### About us

Connect Hackney aims to improve the wellbeing of Hackney residents aged 50 and over by reducing or preventing loneliness and isolation. The £5.8m six-year programme (2015 – 2021) is one of 14 programmes across England funded by National Lottery Community Fund's 'Fulfilling Lives, Ageing Better' programme.

We are working with partners from across the borough's voluntary and community sector to achieve our aim of reducing and preventing social isolation for people aged 50 and over.

In phase one of Connect Hackney we funded over 20 community projects to support older people to participate in activities designed to bring them into contact with other people in the community, with the aim of improving their wellbeing.

The learning and evidence from phase one shaped our commissioning priorities going forward. New partners in the current stage of phase two are focusing on:

Addressing the needs of groups that are more likely to face social isolation:

- People with learning disabilities;
- People from BAME communities

Investing in models that break down barriers to social participation

- Community connections;
- Digital inclusion;
- Community activities in spaces for all.

Additionally, we have recently published an Invitation to tender to commission a range of projects that meet the needs of socially isolated older





people with complex needs. We have shortlisted these needs under the following three categories:

1. People living with dementia/Alzheimer's
2. People affected by mental health issues, specifically depression and anxiety
3. People who find it difficult to leave home regularly

## **Our learning so far**

Community conversations – social connections as we age:

Between September and November 2017, we commissioned local organisations to host “community conversations” – focus group discussions with local over 50s about ageing in Hackney, using questions developed in conjunction with older people. We also commissioned individual interviews and ran an online survey.

The findings are published in our learning report which is here:

<https://bit.ly/2BMztjv>

In addition, a short infographic report on what we learnt during Phase 1, including case studies and quotes, is available here: <https://bit.ly/2BJY34E>

## **Power of Connections at Connect Hackney**

We have made 3 films about Connect Hackney. The films document the connection with Connect Hackney and the positive impact the programme has had on participants, especially in terms of socialising and wellbeing.

### **Silver Linings film**

The Silver Linings project – run by Groundwork London – brought together local older people to share social activities and to help others through





volunteering. In the video, participants explain how they enjoyed taking part and how doing so improved their social lives.

“When my husband died, I’d lost all my friends because he was ill for 7 years. So, it was somewhere to come out and meet people and...talk to other people other than my immediate family. I did look forward to it – a nice barbeque in the garden, that was lovely.” *Irene*

### **The Senior Media group film**

The Connect Hackney senior media group is made up of Hackney residents aged over 50. Walter, aged 88, is our oldest participant to date. Media group members receive training in computers, photography, interviewing and writing skills and produce stories, photos, and audio for the Connect Hackney website and Hackney Senior magazine. The latest edition of Hackney Senior can be found at: <https://bit.ly/2BLUlls>

“When I first joined the group I thought to myself, *Well, how will I get on?* because you’re always nervous when you first join a group, but when I joined...the teacher Natasha, very natural and very kind and careful and always helpful and that gave us all confidence.

I’ve had a bit of a mixed bag because I’ve been ill on and off...but I’ve got a lot out of it, and I feel inspired to go on and do some more.” *Charles*

### **Mindfulness meditation film**

“My friend died and that was a huge change for me...I felt abandoned and I felt suddenly I was older and getting old and achy. I felt I couldn’t cope any more. (Now) I’m not locked in myself. I think I was locked in myself.” *Anne*

Watch our Silver Linings, Mindfulness and Media group films here:

<http://www.connecthackney.org.uk/films-podcasts/>





## Windrush, Stories of a Hackney Generation

*"I come with the sunshine in my bones still, so I wasn't feeling cold you know"*

During 2018 we recorded stories from Hackney's Windrush generation. These stories are available as a [commemorative booklet](#) and a series of audio podcasts: <https://soundcloud.com/user-841795228>

The sense of community and connection was particularly strong during the Hackney Windrush project. The experience of a specific Hackney generation coming together, sharing heritage and experience and storytelling was moving and profound.

**End.**

