

Camden

H HIGHGATE
NEWTOWN
COMMUNITY
PARTNERS

Something Special for Everyone

Charity Number: 290712

www.hncp.org.uk

Impact Review

2025



Building Belonging | Supporting Young People | Celebrating Our Diverse Community

Our Impact at a Glance

At HNCP every month

4,300+

HNCP Club Card Members

400+

Meals eaten at Community Lunch Clubs

170

Bookable activities across all venues

22

Play sessions for babies and toddlers

1,000+

individuals through the doors



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Front cover of Impact Review

The Rt Hon Baroness Margaret Hodge DBE

Lindsey Hughes - Headmistress at Channing School

Andrew Sanalidro - Director, Highgate Newtown Community Partners (andrew.s@hncp.org.uk)

Introductions



RACHEL DOOLEY

Camden Resident | Autism and neurodivergence Advocate | Mother of Five

As a lifelong resident of Camden, a former SEND child within the borough and now a parent and SEND advocate, I welcome you to this Impact Report for Highgate Newtown Community Partners.

My connection to Camden spans 40 years. I have experienced the borough as a child navigating special educational needs and now as a mother supporting five SEND children. I have seen Camden at its best and at its most challenging.

Lived Experience

Through lived experience and advocacy work, I have supported families navigating SEND processes, social care assessments, education disputes and access to basic services. As someone who is neurodivergent myself, I bring a perspective shaped by both personal and community experience. What I see repeatedly is that families with the least economic power struggle most. Disabled residents,

low-income families and marginalised communities often face delayed assessments, reduced specialist provision and services that feel difficult to access. Policy decisions can disproportionately affect those without financial flexibility.

Over time, this has reshaped Camden's grassroots community. Many long-standing families have moved away because they could no longer afford to remain or access the support they needed. Informal connection and trusted spaces have reduced, and for disabled residents even practical changes such as road access restrictions can increase isolation.

Community Voice

As someone closely connected to Somali, Muslim and SEND communities in Camden, I hear consistent concerns about being unheard and misunderstood, about the loss of trusted spaces, and about lived experience not being central to decision-making.

When community structures are removed, trust erodes.

When participation becomes harder, isolation grows.

Community cannot survive on paper alone. It must be actively supported, listened to, and co-produced with the people who live here.

Highgate Newtown Community Partners represents something vital: local voice, accountability and long-term commitment. Community cannot survive on paper alone. It must be actively supported, listened to, and co-produced with the people who live here.

Community is not an optional extra. It is infrastructure.

I remain committed to using my voice constructively to help ensure Camden becomes a borough where all residents, regardless of income, disability or background, can participate fully and feel they belong.



INTRODUCTION FROM ROBERT AITKEN – CHAIR HNCP

I am delighted to share with you our latest Impact Report. It is a little over a year since HNCP opened the doors of the new Community Centre in Bertram Street to add to our community offering which we have provided with our partners.

There really is ‘Something special for everyone’ as you can read below. The home team have worked tirelessly with partners to maintain existing services as well as working up a brand new centre to capacity - this is work in hand.

Importantly with much help and good will from London Borough of Camden, we are very keen with our new community forum ‘Community Conversations’ to listen to feedback and respond appropriately so far as possible.

Time and effort also continues to be spent on encouraging higher-earning members of our community to engage and contribute financially, so far as they feel able.

Looking forward

Food will continue to be central to how we bring people together and support our community. In line with the Camden Food Mission, we will be welcoming a diverse range of community groups into The Kitchen to build cooking skills and share knowledge about nutrition and eating well on a budget.

Alongside this, we will be offering a daily low-cost community lunch in the café at the new centre, as well as pizza evenings where people can dine in or take away. These activities are supported by grants that enable us to train and support young people under 25, giving them opportunities to develop valuable work experience and practical life skills.

The new hostel on Chester Road is expected to open in 2026 and will be an important additional resource for the local area. We look forward to welcoming new residents and helping them settle into the community.

Our aim remains simple: to ensure that HNCP offers something special for everyone.

This is an exciting and busy time and we relish the challenge. Enjoy reading quite how much we have achieved, and do come and visit the new centre for yourself!



H HIGHGATE
NEIGHBOURHOOD
COMMUNITY
PARTNERS
**COMMUNITY
CENTRE**
Family & Youth Hub
25 BERTHAM STREET
←

COUNCILLOR CAMRON AREF-ADIB

I grew up in Dartmouth Park after my family found refuge in Camden after fleeing Iran as refugees.

Highgate Newtown Community Centre was a cornerstone of my childhood and teenage years with many hours spent playing football here. Now, I am proud to serve the community I call home as one of your local Labour Councillors for Highgate.

Charlie Browne was my mentor back then and to this day he continues to support and inspire local children through football training here at HNCP.

The new building and facilities now mean that local children such as me can benefit from a fully equipped sports hall and gym, art and pottery room, and fantastic activities for young and old.

COUNCILLOR ANNA WRIGHT

I believe passionately in the importance of a strong and vibrant voluntary and community sector. It's community organisations, shaped by and for local people, that create the strong social fabric of our borough here in Camden.

Highgate Newtown Community Partners has evolved from the community centre where my three children came to play, into an expanding community network with reach across the whole of Highgate and beyond.

As Labour Councillor for Highgate, I've been proud to play my part in this journey, watching HNCP go from strength to strength. I will continue to support HNCP in every way I can in the years ahead.



Councillor Camron Aref-Adib and Councillor Anna Wright with Charlie Browne, Founder and CEO, 2TR Football Ltd

Councillor Camron Aref-Adib and Councillor Anna Wright outside HNCP



Building Belonging: Connections That Strengthen Lives

At Highgate Newtown Community Partners, everything we do is rooted in relationships. We believe strong neighbourhoods are built through everyday moments: a warm welcome, a shared activity, a conversation that helps someone feel seen and valued.

This year marks an important chapter for HNCP. We are celebrating our first year in our new centre on Bertram Street, while continuing to deliver activities across the community in familiar venues and shared spaces. Together, these spaces allow us to reach people where they are, reduce barriers to participation, and remain accessible to all.

OUR VALUES

Customer Care

Communities are constantly evolving, and so are the needs of the people within them. Our team works closely with local residents to understand what they want and need from HNCP, listening, learning and responding quickly. We treat every person as an individual and strive to offer a warm, respectful welcome, whether someone is visiting for the first time or has been part of HNCP for many years.

“The community in Highgate is changing so much - so many of the local shops have gone and people don't know each other like we used to. HNCP gives people the chance to do things together and get to know their neighbours. I'm looking forward to the cafe in the community centre reopening as it will make a big difference to us.”

- Vicki, Customer Services Officer

Connection and Partnership

Lasting impact is built through partnership. HNCP works closely with local organisations, schools, community businesses, volunteers and residents to strengthen what already exists and create new opportunities together. By working collaboratively, we extend our reach, share learning and ensure our services reflect the strengths and diversity of our neighbourhood.



Courage and Kindness

It takes courage for people to step through our doors – to ask for support, try something new, or reconnect after a period of isolation. We meet that courage with kindness. Our spaces are welcoming, calm and non-judgemental, allowing people to take part at their own pace and feel safe to be themselves.

Courage at HNCP also means being brave on behalf of our community. We listen carefully to what people tell us, speak up when systems are not working for them, and will be bold in our conversations with partners – advocating for what local people need, not just what is easiest to deliver.



Something Special for Everyone

Above all, we are guided by a simple principle: no one should be left behind. This shapes how we design activities, set prices, choose venues and work in partnership. Connection is not a luxury, it is essential to wellbeing and at the heart of all that we do.







Faith:

We welcome all faiths and those with none – please join us.

BUILDING OUR FAITH

Our Faith Partners

- St Anne's Church, Highgate
- St Michael's Church, Highgate
- St Dominic's - The Rosary Shrine
- Rosslyn Hill Unitarian Chapel
- St Mary Brookfield

“I am very proud of the support we receive from our faith partners each week, and we could not provide our services without them.

Our work includes low-cost lunch clubs, stay-and-play children's activities, and the sharing of buildings, office space, staff teams, and funding.

HNCP's values are rooted in our care for people and for one another. I would like to thank all of our faith partners for their continued support. Thank you.”

- Andrew Sanalitra, Director – HNCP



St Dominic's Lunch Club

St Dominic's has been a Catholic parish in Camden since the 19th century, caring for local people whose backgrounds are diverse. The resident community of ten Dominican friars works with charities and institutions to support the social and pastoral needs of the local community. In addition to daily church services, the friars provide chaplaincy to the Royal Free Hospital, two local care homes, and to the Rosary Primary School. The friars also have a strong educational focus, giving talks, retreats and conferences nationally and some internationally, both in person and online. Also, our site hosts the main studio of Radio Maria England, which has an important outreach to the elderly and the isolated at home as well as providing lots of volunteering opportunities for people in the area.

Designated as the 'Rosary Shrine', our very large Grade II* listed church welcomes people from across London for daily services and even attracts international visitors. St Dominic's provides artistic and cultural outreach with concerts in the church, especially on our famous 1883 Willis organ.

We are a local landmark with a bus stop named for 'St Dominic's Priory', served by the number 24 and number 46, so the church hall is easily accessible for our activities building up the local community.

Working in partnership with Highgate Newtown Community Partners (HNCP) since 2023, we run a successful lunch club on Thursdays to support people in the wider community (regardless of faith or belief) to come together in a warm and welcoming space, receive a nutritious meal and grow relationships. There is significant need within our local community, where people are facing a range of challenges as a result of poverty, loneliness, and ill health. We want to continue to support people and provide them with a sense of hope and community.

Fr Matthew Jarvis OP
Prior

OUR IMPACT IN NUMBERS

Helping people feel better 2025

20 lunch clubs every month across five venues

50% discount for people aged over 65 at Hatice's hair salon

20 group exercise classes a week – Zumba, Yoga and Pilates

450+ people making things from clay at ClayTime

10+ activities each week offered on a sliding scale payment basis

Sliding scale of payment for more than 10 activities



Helping People Feel Better: Health, Movement and Belonging

The opening of the new community centre on Bertram Street has created new and exciting opportunities for local residents to look after their physical health and mental wellbeing in ways that feel welcoming, affordable and achievable. The new sports hall and activity spaces have quickly become well used, offering people a chance to move more, build confidence and connect with others as part of their everyday lives.

For many residents, these activities are not just about exercise, but about routine, motivation and feeling part of something shared. Sessions are designed to be inclusive, supportive and adaptable, helping people to take part in ways that work for them.

MOVEMENT AND FITNESS

Pilates

Community Pilates, led by Tamar, offers a chance to gain strength and mobility weekly in a friendly, inclusive atmosphere. Sessions are welcoming and calm, with adaptations offered so people of all ages and abilities can take part comfortably and at their own pace. Classes are offered for a £3 donation.



Harmony Pilates, with Anna Longmuir, offers a range of classes throughout the week blending classic Pilates with strength training to improve

flexibility, balance and core strength, while supporting mental wellbeing.



Yoga

Vinyasa Flow Yoga is led by local resident Hannah Mayall, who has been practising yoga for over 30 years. Open to all abilities, Hannah especially encourages people who feel they may be 'too old' or 'too unfit' to give yoga a try. For Hannah, yoga is an internal and individual practice, focused on connection, breath and awareness rather than perfect poses. Participants often speak about feeling more relaxed, grounded and confident after sessions.

Zumba

Zumba with Niki Kashani brings high energy and joy to the sports hall twice a week. These lively sessions boost fitness, lift spirits and are filled with laughter and smiles. Niki's teaching style combines upbeat movement with a genuinely welcoming atmosphere, making each class feel fun, empowering and inclusive – even for those who have never tried dance-based exercise before.



BINGO: COMMUNITY, LAUGHTER AND CONNECTION

Bingo has been a big hit at the Community Centre, bringing people of all ages together for a chance to win the prize money and have a laugh.

“The Christmas bingo evening was a brilliant way to end the year. The room was full, the atmosphere was lively and the food provided by Runa was talked about almost as much as the bingo itself. People played, ate together and shared plenty of laughs, turning an ordinary bingo night into a proper celebration.”

- Nadine, Centre Manager

A huge part of what makes bingo work is the people behind it. Dave, the in-house bingo caller, keeps the pace fast and the energy high, while Bev, who has



supported bingo from the very beginning, adds her own touch with the homemade cakes everyone looks forward to.

Bingo has become a really important session for people who might not usually leave the house because of age, health or disability. It offers something familiar, affordable and easy to join – and once people come, they stay for the company as much as the game.

COMMUNITY LAUNDRY

The not-for-profit Community Laundry is an important and much-valued part of the new community centre. Many households cannot afford a washing machine or lack the space to install one. At just £2 for a wash and £2 for a drying session, it offers a genuinely affordable alternative. The large machines can also handle bulky items such as duvets that many domestic machines cannot manage.

While they wait, people can sit with an affordable cup of tea, take a break, and often discover what else is happening in the centre. For some, a laundry visit becomes a chance to chat, find out about an activity or simply spend a little time in a warm, welcoming space.



HATICE'S HAIRDRESSING

Hatice's hairdressing salon has quickly become one of the most cherished spaces in the new centre – a warm, friendly room filled with laughter, positivity and the hum of easy conversation. People come for the excellent hairdressing, but just as often they speak about how the salon makes them feel.

"I've recently moved to Hatice's salon because not only do I get a great haircut, but the room is lovely, and Hatice is always smiling and so welcoming."

- Coral, regular customer

For Christine, who went a long time without visiting a hairdresser, the half-price offer for over-65s encouraged her to give it a try. She now books regularly.

"It is the best haircut I have ever had, ever, ever."

- Christine

The impact reaches beyond the chair. One local resident shared that Hatice is 'the reason my mum leaves the house.' Hatice's salon is open five days a week and continues to offer a 50% discount for people aged 65 and over, helping people feel good about themselves – inside and out.



CREATIVE WELLBEING

Looking after wellbeing is not only about physical activity. Creative expression and calm, focused spaces can be just as important.

ClayTime: Creativity, Calm and Community

ClayTime is a community business with a simple and powerful mission: to help people feel better about themselves and their community through clay and creativity. Based in the calm, light-filled studio on the first floor, ClayTime offers a welcoming space where people of all ages and abilities can explore pottery, learn new skills and express themselves.

Its social enterprise model means income from public sessions directly supports discounted workshops for local schools and community groups. Since opening, more than 450 people have taken part, including students from New River College and Brookfield School, as well as groups from Camden Summer University, Channing School and Radford Home Care.

H, a student from New River College, found a strong connection with clay during an eight-week therapeutic programme. Each week his ideas grew bolder – first a thumb pot, then a vase, a bowl, a bigger bowl, his confidence expanding with every piece.

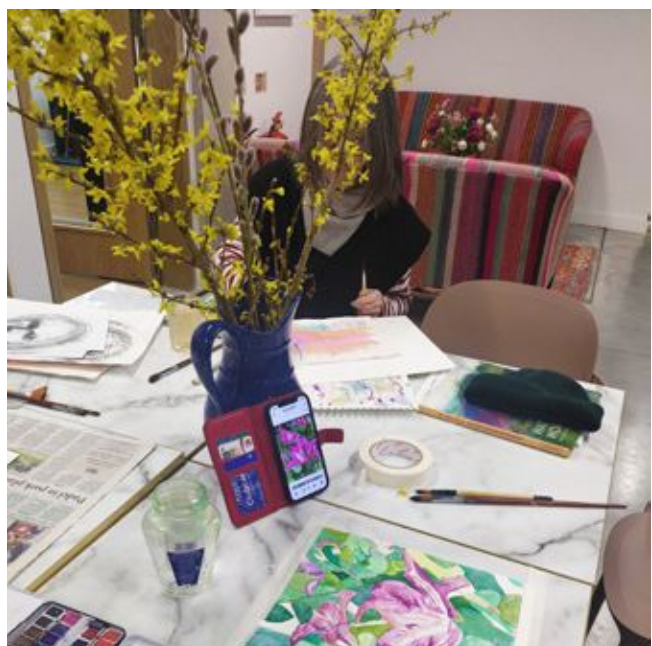
J, aged 11, first attended a family session and instantly loved the studio, returning many times to make gifts for relatives and enjoying the freedom to create.

In autumn 2025, a single father living beside the Community Centre brought his family to the ClayTime studio. Balancing work, caring responsibilities and a low income, this was the first activity they had been able to do together since moving to Camden. Starting cautiously, the family soon relaxed, delighting in their creations and enjoying the simple pleasure of spending time together.

Art Classes

Janet Campbell's adult art classes – 'Arts and Crafts' and 'Art as Therapy' – have become very popular, attracting adults aged 20s to 80s ranging from complete beginners to accomplished artists. In the Arts and Crafts sessions, students learn drawing, painting, collage, claywork and printing from nature. Art as Therapy starts with a simple meditation and provides a chance to explore themes through creative expression. The class is not prescriptive and allows students time for reflection and to develop their individual artistic interests.

One of the highlights of the year was a session hosted in partnership with Hopscotch, bringing together regular art class attendees and a group of Afghan women recently rehoused nearby. Using the theme 'The Art of Calligraphy', participants created expressive letterforms inspired by flowers, foliage and personal memories. What began as a reserved group soon became lively and joyful, with conversation and laughter emerging through shared creativity.





PAY WHAT YOU CAN: MAKING WELLBEING ACCESSIBLE

One of HNCP's core values is that no one is left behind – including being excluded from activities due to cost. Many sessions operate on a 'Pay What You Can' sliding scale, allowing people to choose what feels right without needing proof of income or benefits:

PAY WHAT YOU CAN

Tier 3 £10: I am financially comfortable

Tier 2 £5: I get by, but money can be tight

Tier 1 £3 or less: I struggle to meet basic needs

In addition, HNCP operates a Pay It Forward Fund, which encourages people who can to help cover the costs of activities for others. Donations go directly towards free places for people on very low incomes, those facing life-limiting illness, or people experiencing crisis.

In 2025 £700 was donated to enable others to access free classes and services.

The Pay It Forward Fund is available via kiosks on the ground floor of the Bertram Street Community Centre and through our website.



CLLR NASRINE DJEMAI

Cabinet Member for New Homes and Community Investment, London Borough of Camden

As a lifelong Camden resident who moved into a new council home due to being displaced by HS2, I know first-hand the transformative change that public investment in our communities can have on a person's life. The feeling of renewed hope and possibility is something that I saw reflected in the new Highgate Newtown Community Centre when I visited for the first time during the wonderful opening ceremony in May 2025.

At a time when difficult economic circumstances make it feel like councils can't make ambitious investments in our communities, I'm proud that here in Camden we are bucking this trend and delivering high-quality community spaces that are already making a positive impact in the borough, as you will see in this review.

And projects like this have allowed us to tackle one of the most crucial challenges facing councils across the country – alongside a state-of-the-art community centre, thirty six new family-sized council homes were also built as part of the wider development of the area. Thanks to government funding we could bring these homes, which would have been sold on the private market, into the council stock. This will provide the solid foundations for a healthy and successful life for families and additional council homes for generations in the future.

I would like to thank HNCP for their effort to deliver vital services to the community in Highgate and beyond and look forward to seeing this dedicated work continue.



OUR IMPACT IN NUMBERS

Young People 2025

650+ children and families supported at under-5s sessions

9 Camden schools in the Education+ partnership

97% of parents rated sessions 9 or 10 out of 10

8 after school activities a week at the new HNCP Community Centre

238 parents connected through WhatsApp support group

400+ play sessions for under 5s delivered across five venues

97% rated staff as welcoming and friendly

Supporting young people to learn, grow and thrive

HNCP supports children and young people from their earliest years through to adulthood, creating spaces where they can play, build confidence, learn new skills and feel part of a wider community. Our activities support parents and carers too, recognising the importance of strong family connections and peer support.

BABIES AND TODDLERS: PLAY, LANGUAGE & CONNECTION

In 2025 we hosted seven sessions per week for under-5s across the new Community Centre, St Michael's Church, St Mary Brookfield Church, Rosslyn Hill Unitarian Chapel and Kentish Town Community Centre. Some of these sessions were newly introduced this year, while others have been running for more than six years.

Each group provides opportunities for play, language development and early learning, alongside support and connection for parents and carers.



During 2025 we supported more than 650 children and their parents and carers across 400 play sessions. This figure is slightly lower than in 2024 as a key grant came to an end and we had to reduce the number of sessions and introduce a small charge at some activities. Despite this, we continued to deliver seven sessions each week across five venues and supported a lively WhatsApp group connecting 238 parents and carers.

What parents and carers told us

Feedback remains extremely positive: 97% rated our staff and volunteers as welcoming and friendly, and 97% rated the sessions 9 or 10 out of 10.

We received feedback from 49 parents and carers about the direct impact on their child:

85% said their child was more able to engage positively with other children

87% said their child was more able to engage positively with adults

70% said their child was more able to share toys with others

82% said their child was more able to play independently

85% said their child was more likely to recognise and sing songs and nursery rhymes

“The welcome is great. You can walk in off the street and be so welcome. I feel so much less alone, and I know my daughter is benefiting from being with other children.”

- Parent, Gospel Oak

AFTER SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Each afternoon the Community Centre fills with movement, laughter and the sound of children burning off energy after the school day.

Bouldering: Building confidence through climbing

Bouldering sessions run on Mondays and Wednesdays, with children using the custom-built climbing wall in the sports hall to build strength, coordination and confidence.

What stands out is how quickly children begin to encourage one another. It is common to see children stopping mid-climb to watch a friend offer advice or celebrate a successful route. Some arrive feeling unsure and leave having tried something they did not think they could do. Over time, the climbing wall has become a place where children return week after week not just to climb, but to build confidence and feel part of a supportive group.



Football that brings children together

Football Fridays with Charlie have been met with huge enthusiasm, with more than 20 children attending each session. The sessions bring together children from refugee families, students from

different schools, and children with diverse abilities in a relaxed and positive environment.

Some children join quietly at first, watching from the side before taking part. As the session goes on, they begin to join in more fully, try new skills and take part in games. Over time, children develop their football skills, including ball control, passing and teamwork, while growing more confident in taking part. The emphasis on enjoyment over competition helps children feel more confident taking part, week by week.



Little Ones Football offers a dedicated group for Reception and Year 1 children aged 4 to 6. The focus is on building a love of the game while developing basic ball control, coordination and team spirit.

Basketball: Skills, teamwork and routine

Basketball is a regular and well-loved activity. Sessions are split by age – 11+ and 18+ - and across the week the three sessions are attended by more than 50 young people. Sessions build from week to week, helping young people improve shooting, passing and movement, while building confidence, focus and a sense of routine.



ClayTime Pottery Studio has become a haven for many young people – a calm, creative space to make thumb pots, explore materials and progress towards using the pottery wheel. Sessions run after school and at weekends, with some families benefiting from exclusive sessions just for them. Sessions can be booked online at www.claytime.london

A welcoming space for families

The cafe space plays an important supporting role. During the winter months, more families use the space for homework, drawing and quiet time together.

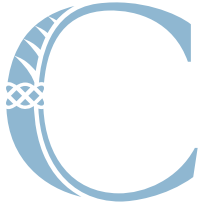
Creative spaces: The Kitchen and ClayTime

The Kitchen: After School Cooking Club The after-school cooking club runs in two age groups (5–7 and 8–10). Children attend alongside a parent or carer, bringing a strong family element into the learning. At just £2.50 per child the club offers excellent value, developing confidence and a lifelong relationship with food.



“We live in quite a small flat and usually go to the park after school. It has been a life saver to come here instead. It is so warm, and the children are happy to do their homework and interact with other children.”

- Parent, Gospel Oak



CHANNING

EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP: BRIDGING GAPS, BUILDING CONFIDENCE with Channing School

HNCP's partnership with Channing School is rooted in a shared commitment to ensuring that children and young people can access educational, cultural and social opportunities, regardless of background or income. This is a reciprocal relationship. Pupils learn through experience, while community members participate in shared spaces built on respect and trust.

For both HNCP and Channing School, the work responds to widening gaps in attainment and opportunity shaped by poverty, the lasting impact of the pandemic and growing pressures on schools and families.

Education+ Partnership Clubs

Education+ brings together pupils from Channing School and partner schools including Brookfield Primary, St Aloysius' College, La Sainte Union, St Joseph's Primary, Parliament Hill School, Whitehall Primary and William Ellis School.

Small group sessions create an environment where children feel comfortable asking questions and trying new things. Teachers report that quieter pupils often participate more actively in these sessions, showing improvements in communication and confidence.

"We're making a volcano at the moment and I also discovered that I like to explode things."

"It's really fun, especially when we got to look through microscopes. I never knew you could look at germs and see their inside."

- Pupils, Brookfield School

"It was meaningful when the pupils began asking lots of questions. It showed they were really interested."

"I really enjoy getting to know the students from Brookfield and I look forward to each week. This has helped me develop leadership and communication skills."

- Channing pupil volunteer

What makes Education+ particularly effective is its consistency. Relationships build over time and pupils on both sides benefit from working together in a way that feels purposeful and grounded in real experience.

Summer Camp 2025

HNCP's Summer Camp 2025 brought together pupils from six North London partner schools for a week of learning and fun at Channing Junior School. More than 50% of pupils were eligible for Pupil Premium, alongside pupils with SEND, Young Carer status and English as an Additional Language.

Morning sessions focused on Maths, English, Humanities, Drama and Debating in small, supportive groups. Afternoon sessions included team sports, Forest School and creative challenges. Participants particularly enjoyed spending time outdoors and valued the balance of movement, creativity and teamwork alongside structured learning.



SUMMER CAMP 2025: IMPACT SNAPSHOT

Confidence grew

- Growth mindset increased by 3.3%, with measurable improvements in self-efficacy and social confidence

Connections strengthened

- 100% enjoyed learning alongside peers from their schools

Joy mattered

- 97% found sessions fun and interesting

Families felt the difference

- 92% of parents satisfied or very satisfied
- 92% said their child enjoyed camp very much

Communita: Learning through conversation

Communita brings together older local residents with Channing pupils and staff once a month. Over tea and conversation, relationships develop naturally. Pupils practise listening and communication while residents enjoy company and regular contact. What stands out is how quickly trust builds, turning a simple gathering into something people look forward to.



HIGHGATE HAVEN YOUTH HUB: A DEDICATED SPACE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

The top floor of Highgate Newtown Community Centre is home to Highgate Haven Youth Hub, a dedicated youth space delivered by Camden Council in partnership with HNCP.

Since becoming fully operational in late 2025, the Hub has quickly established itself as a trusted and vibrant space for young people across Camden. Attendance has grown steadily month by month, with the majority of young people living locally and choosing to spend their after-school hours at the Hub, often staying into the evening. The programme is broad, responsive and shaped by young people's interests.

Current sessions include:

- Football and dodgeball, building teamwork, fitness and confidence
- Cooking workshops, promoting healthy choices and practical life skills
- Art and therapeutic sessions, supporting emotional expression and resilience
- Book club, encouraging literacy and reflective thinking
- Girls Advisory Board, ensuring young women shape decisions and influence provision
- Table tennis leagues, fostering positive competition and friendship

The Hub supports young people aged 11 to 19, and up to 25 for those with SEND. Recent investment completed development of an on-site gym hosting tailored fitness and wellbeing programmes. Most importantly, Highgate Haven offers something every community needs: a safe space where young people are known, heard and encouraged to thrive.



Food That Nourishes Body, Confidence and Community

Food plays a central role in community life at HNCP. It brings people together, supports health and wellbeing, and creates opportunities for connection. Through cooking activities in The Kitchen and our community lunch programme, we help people access affordable, freshly cooked food while creating welcoming spaces where people can eat together, learn new skills and feel part of something shared.

THE KITCHEN: BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER WITH FOOD, CONFIDENCE AND CULTURE

The Kitchen is more than just a place to cook. It is a lively, welcoming space where people of all ages come together to learn, share stories and enjoy good food. Kitchen Coordinator Mikhail Lumanov is at the heart of this work. With warmth, humour and encouragement, he helps even the most hesitant beginner feel at ease.

One of the most popular programmes is the after-school cooking club, where local children explore food from around the world, tasting unfamiliar dishes and forming friendships that extend beyond The Kitchen. Alongside this, The Kitchen hosts workshops for people adapting to a diabetes-friendly diet, for people living with dementia, and for refugees and local families. Each session is shaped to be inclusive, practical and welcoming, ensuring that everyone leaves with something valuable, whether a new skill, a recipe or a sense of belonging.

Spotlight: Intergenerational Cooking

One of the highlights of the year was an intergenerational cooking workshop with Afghan mothers and daughters. Before the session even began, Mikhail described hearing 'the buzz as they gathered together downstairs.'

"We divided into four groups to prepare a favourite dessert from across the Arab world – Kunafah. There was so much laughter and playful teasing! I think it was the happiest atmosphere we've ever had in The Kitchen. Everyone felt completely at ease. It was a brilliant reminder that, with kindness and respect, we can break down barriers and replace nerves with genuine warmth and confidence."

- Mikhail Lumanov, Kitchen Coordinator

Every session in The Kitchen proves that food isn't just about eating – it's about sharing, learning and building a stronger, more confident community, one delicious meal at a time.



COMMUNITY LUNCHESES: AFFORDABLE FOOD AND SHARED TABLES

Alongside The Kitchen, HNCP runs five community lunches each week across different local venues. Meals cost around £2.50 and offer at least two courses of healthy, freshly cooked food. The lunches are about more than food alone – they provide a place where people can eat together, often with others they would not usually meet. People attend for many reasons: they live alone, find cooking difficult, cannot afford to cook regularly, or simply enjoy the company and routine of a shared meal. For some, this is the only meal they eat with other people during the week.



COMMUNITY LUNCHESES 2025

Monday:

HNCP, 30 Bertram Street

Tuesday:

St Michael's Church, Highgate

Wednesday:

St Michael's Church, Highgate

Thursday:

Our Lady of the Rosary and St Dominic,
Haverstock Hill

Friday:

Fish and Chips
at St Mary Brookfield, Dartmouth Park



On Fridays, fish and chips are served in boxes, creating the familiar feel of a local fish and chip shop. Volunteers also deliver fish and chips to vulnerable local residents who are unable to attend in person, offering both a hot meal and a friendly point of contact. For many, this delivery is an important lifeline and a reminder that they are not forgotten.



FISH & CHIPS



Giving People Voice: Shaping Services Together

HNCP is embedded in our local community, and that means listening carefully to the people who use the centre, live nearby and take part in activities. We want all of our services to be shaped by local ideas, experiences and priorities, rather than something decided from the top down.

Many of the activities taking place already reflect this approach. Local people lead sessions and share their skills – through sport, creativity and wellbeing activities. Basketball, yoga, and other sessions are led by local people, and many members of the HNCP team are part of the neighbourhood themselves. We also know that listening needs to go beyond informal conversations. We are beginning to put in place clearer ways for residents to share ideas, raise concerns and help shape what happens next.

CONNECTED CONVERSATIONS

An important part of this work is the Connected Conversations project, recently begun in partnership with the Camden Federation of Private Tenants and funded through the London Borough of Camden.

Connected Conversations provides a structured way for people who live in the area and use our services to help shape them. The project focuses on reaching people who are not always involved in community activities, including private renters and those experiencing isolation. Through outreach, conversations and the creation of a local Residents Forum, the project helps residents come together to talk about what matters to them.

What we learn through these conversations guides how the centre develops, alongside local data and the insights of partner organisations. This work is still in its early stages, but it marks a clear commitment to ensuring the centre continues to grow in ways that shaped by the community itself.

Our aim is simple: that people who use the centre know their views matter, and that activities and services reflect the lives, needs and ideas of the neighbourhood.

CUPPA WITH A COPPA

Once a month, the local police team spend time in the Community Centre, making themselves available to residents in a relaxed and welcoming setting. Over a cup of tea, people can raise local issues, ask for advice or simply have a conversation. There is no set agenda and no need to book.

By hosting these sessions in the Community Centre, the police team become part of everyday community life rather than separate from it. For many residents, Cuppa with a Coppa offers a simple, friendly way to build trust, share concerns and stay connected to local developments.





In the past year we have:

- Hosted a weekly women's health and wellbeing session with movement, relaxation, and confidence-building activities.
- Offered private cooking and pottery sessions to families, some of whom have as many as nine children, giving them the chance to bond, relax, and express themselves in a safe space.
- Installed blinds in key rooms such as Hatice's Hairdressing Salon, which means that women can feel comfortable whilst maintaining privacy. This has dramatically improved their confidence and engagement.
- Hosted a well-attended refugee community celebration (over 200 attendees), which allowed families to explore the centre and connect with staff.
- Organised a trip to the seaside - simple but joyful.

Celebrating our Diverse Community

Building inclusive, welcoming communities remains central to HNCP's mission. In a context where inequality can easily deepen division, we are intentional about creating spaces where everyone feels they belong.

In 2025, this commitment was reflected in both small and everyday acts of inclusion – from hosting ClayTime sessions for refugee families finding their feet in a new country, to offering reduced-cost haircuts for older residents on low incomes. These practical interventions, though simple, help remove barriers to participation and signal that community spaces are for everyone.

The area surrounding the new community centre is ethnically diverse, and we have observed growing confidence among residents to share space and take part in activities alongside one another. Sustaining and strengthening this sense of shared belonging will remain a priority in the years ahead.

HOPSCOTCH WOMEN'S CENTRE

We are proud to have Hopscotch Women's Centre based at the Highgate Newtown Community Centre. As a London-wide advocacy service, Hopscotch supports thousands of women experiencing poverty, domestic abuse, mental health challenges and barriers to employment, and specialises in working with refugees and individuals facing social isolation.

Their presence strengthens the centre's ability to respond to complex needs, ensuring that women can access specialist advice and advocacy within a trusted community setting.

SUPPORTING REFUGEE COMMUNITIES IN THE CITY OF LONDON

In recent years, HNCP expanded its geographical reach to include the City of London, Islington and Haringey. In 2025, we were invited to pilot support for refugee communities in the City of London with funding from the National Lottery Community Fund.

Working in partnership with Paiwand, we secured space at Golden Lane Community Centre to engage refugee and migrant communities connected to temporary accommodation and wider local networks. Outreach included engagement with approximately 125 statutory and voluntary sector organisations, alongside local estate-based promotion.

Two informal drop-in sessions were delivered, focused on beauty, hairdressing and wellbeing as accessible entry points for conversation and connection. Attendance from residents not already known to the centre or Paiwand was lower than anticipated. This coincided with protests outside a local refugee hostel and guidance from Migrant Help advising refugees to exercise caution in engaging with new organisations.

While participation was limited, the pilot strengthened relationships with Paiwand and the Golden Lane Community Centre and provided valuable insights into trust-building in sensitive contexts. We maintain strong local partnerships and aim to build on this work in the future.

LONG TERM IMPACT

2TR Football & Mind and Play

607 young people have completed the Mind and Play programme in partnership with HNCP

12% of graduates progressing into paid employment

10 weekly football sessions developed from one original session in 1999

1,000+ adults supported through youth and health programmes

Building Skills, Confidence and Local Enterprise

Something special happens when a community centre invests in its own people. Children who once came through the doors to play sport come back years later to coach. Parents who brought their children to sessions return to teach. Local residents turn ideas into businesses, and businesses give back to the same neighbourhood that helped shape them.

At HNCP, we do not just host activities. We give local people the space, encouragement and practical support to grow – helping someone test an idea, develop a qualification, build confidence to lead a group, or turn a passion into paid work. When people see someone who grew up where they grew up, it builds a powerful kind of confidence and helps young people see what is possible.

FROM PLAYER TO COACH

Spotlight: Will Greenhalgh – Basketball Coach

Will grew up locally, attending Brookfield Primary, Acland Burghley and LaSWAP sixth form. Sport shaped his early life, first through swimming and then basketball with Islington Panthers. He began coaching while still in Year 10 – an early responsibility that built confidence and direction.

In 2024, Will graduated with a degree in Sports Therapy, combining his love of sport with specialist knowledge in injury prevention and rehabilitation. Today he coaches basketball to children aged 6 to 14 at HNCP, focusing not only on skills but on discipline, mindset and self-belief. The local connection really matters to Will – he is proud of supporting young people growing up in the same area he did. HNCP is proud to support Will and all the young people who come to play basketball.



FROM EXPERIENCE TO EXPRESSION

Spotlight: Janet Campbell – Art Teacher

Janet has lived locally for more than forty years. She first came to the centre as a parent but now returns as a teacher and art therapy practitioner. After training later in life, Janet was encouraged by HNCP to develop art therapy sessions for local residents.

“Returning to teaching in my retirement has allowed me to stay active and share my experience with people of different ages and backgrounds who enjoy making and creating art together. I see real potential to expand arts provision at the centre, though I’d love to see a dedicated art space for us to work in.”

- Janet Campbell, Art Teacher



FROM FRIDAY FOOTBALL TO ENTERPRISE

Spotlight: Charlie Browne – Founder and CEO, 2TR Football Ltd

Charlie has lived on the same street as the centre since the late 1970s. Shortly after it opened, he was

attending Friday Football as a young person. Twenty years later, he returned as a coach.

From one weekly under-12 session in 1999, football provision grew to ten sessions a week, including girls and women-only sessions. Alongside sports delivery, Charlie helped lead youth and health programmes supporting hundreds of young people and more than 1,000 adults. He went on to co-create 2 Touch Rulz and establish 2TR Football Ltd, alongside the Mind and Play programme, linking sport to life skills and employability.

The weekly Football Friday sessions are hugely popular, in large part due to Charlie’s local connection and love of the area.

“During my time at HNCP I have had the pleasure of working with all ages, genders, and people from lots of different backgrounds supporting their sporting and health ambitions or development. There are hundreds of stories to tell so if you want to hear more come find me at Friday Football @HNCP.”

- Charlie Browne, Founder and CEO, 2TR Football Ltd





From Participant to Instructor

“HNCP was a big part of my life when I grew up locally. I used to attend the weekly football sessions at the centre, and that eventually led to me joining a football team. Many of the friendships I built during that time are relationships I still have today.

As I have got older, my connection with the centre has continued in a different way. Teaching skills on the bouldering wall has given me the chance to meet more people in the community, from the young people and parents who attend the sessions to the other people working in the community centre.

Being part of the team now means a lot to me. The centre played an important role in my early life, giving me opportunities, friendships and a sense of belonging. It feels good to now be doing that for other young people growing up in the area.”

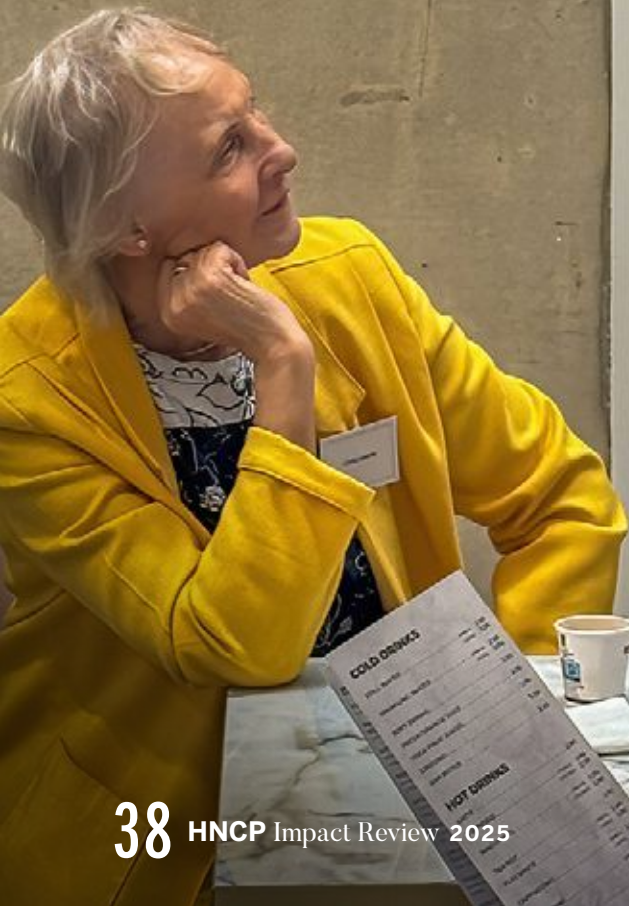
- Ollie Lliana, Bouldering Coach



Linda & Patrick

Linda and Patrick have lived in the area for nearly forty years and since retiring from demanding jobs they wanted to get more involved in their local community. Linda joined the Friends of Highgate Library and soon proved their committee. A gentle start at encouraging to become and membership led to a major campaign to save the library, leading into with many local groups.

Patrick and Linda both joined and supported the Community Centre and were trustees. Patrick went on to play a major role in the Communities First Committee. All these roles have been part of promoting, supporting and strengthening local organisations, and in the process meeting people and making many new friends.



COLD DRINKS	
Apple Juice	£1.50
Orange Juice	£1.50
Soft Drinks	£1.00
Sparkling Water	£1.00
Hot Chocolate	£1.00
Tea	£0.80
Coffee	£0.80
Hot Drinks	£0.80

Looking Forward to 2026

Andrew Sanalitro - Director HNCP

This year has been one of learning, adaptation and discovery. Some things have worked brilliantly from the start. Others have needed to be reviewed, revised and changed. That process of listening and responding is exactly as it should be.

What makes me proudest is seeing local people shape what we do and how we do it. The centre is filled with activities led by residents: football, basketball, art classes, some delivered by people who used the original community centre as children themselves. This is what community leadership looks like in practice, and it gives me enormous confidence in what we can achieve together.

None of this would be possible without the extraordinary people who make HNCP what it is. Huge thanks to Nadine who is now manager of the new centre, and Vicki, Customer Services Officer. Their warm welcome has enabled people to tell us what they want and need, and to step forward and lead activities themselves. Kim and her team provide joyful, nurturing play for our youngest community members, while Tracey and her team prepare delicious food across Camden venues week after week, offering support people can rely on and the warmest of welcomes. I am deeply grateful to every member of the HNCP team for their dedication, creativity and care.

I also want to thank our partners: in the faith community, local schools, the London Borough of Camden, our funding partners and community activists, whose collaboration and support make our work possible. Partnership has always been at the heart of what we do, and it remains central to everything we hope to achieve.

Looking ahead to 2026, we will be bringing people together through Connected Conversations to talk about what matters most to them: safety, learning, loneliness, and the issues that shape everyday life. This will strengthen local voices in the development of services in the community and at HNCP.

One element I am determined to see succeed in the coming year is the café in the new community centre building. In 2026, it will become the heart of the space: somewhere to meet for a cup of coffee, an affordable lunch and a warm welcome. It will be a place where anyone can walk in, sit down and feel they belong.

There is much to do, and much to look forward to. Thank you for being part of this journey.

A note from the editor

“It has been a genuine pleasure to write this report and spend time with the people whose stories fill these pages.

What stands out most is not the building itself, impressive though it is, but the warmth of the relationships being built inside it. From Hatice’s salon where older residents find reasons to leave the house, to The Kitchen where Afghan mothers and daughters cook together with laughter and ease, to Charlie coaching football on the same pitch where he once played as a child: these are stories of connection, belonging and quiet transformation.

Behind every statistic is a person. Behind every session is someone who felt brave enough to walk through the door, and someone else who made them feel welcome when they did.

Thank you to everyone who shared their time, their stories and their trust.”

**– Justina Forristal,
HNCP Independent Impact Report Editor**

Celebrating Recognition

The new community building for HNCP has been nominated or won the following awards:

- HNCP has won a **Regional Finalist Civic Trust Award 2026**.
- The Inside Housing **Best Affordable Housing Development Award**.
- The Architects' Journal, **Best Community & Faith Project**, which contributed to RCKa also receiving the AJ's **Architect of the Year Award**.
- New London Architecture's **Best Built Housing** and the **Overall Winner Award**.
- A Design for Homes, **Housing Design Award**.
- **A Camden Design Award** (only run every 2 years)
- It is shortlisted for a Universal & Accessible Design Excellence award, the **National Selwyn Goldsmith Award**.
- It has been confirmed that it will also win a **National Civic Trust Award** or a **National Highly Commended Award**.

TRUSTEES

Patron His Honour Jeremy Conner
 Chair Robert Aitken
 Stephen Hodge
 Robert Schon
 Roy Hill
 Emma Jay
 Philip Whale
 Fr Damien Mason
 Baiju Naik
 Tomi Ayodeji
 Pauline Treen
 Geoff Pyle

Thank you to your team members who keep HNCP services running:

Nadine	Tracey	Ian
Vicki	Runa	Andrew
Nikki	Kim	Corinne
Will	Dawn	Juliet
Ollie	Hilda	Anna
Janet	Mikhail	Janet
Tamar	Lisa	Corinne
Charlie	Justina	
Ria	Diane	



“As the local Member of Parliament for Hampstead and Highgate, I am so lucky to have wonderful community centres serving my constituents. Highgate Newtown Community Partners has a unique model and state-of-the-art facilities that make it particularly special. Since its re-opening of the new building last year, I have been so impressed to see the HNCP model thriving and serving the people of Highgate. From exercise, to food, to arts and crafts; HNCP has something for everyone in the community.

In October last year, I was delighted to welcome the members of the HNCP community to Parliament for my Hampstead and Highgate Community Heroes reception. Their hard work has brought the beautiful new building to life and filled it with people throughout the week and I wanted to honour those who work to lift others up.

I particularly value how HNCP use food to bring the community together. Through the new Cooking in The Community Project, HNCP uplifts and upskills participants, celebrates diversity and supports a culture of healthy eating within the community. Amid a cost of living crisis, the work that HNCP does to help members prepare healthy, budget-friendly and delicious meals is hugely impactful.

I have loved the time I have spent in HNCP and I look forward to returning soon.”

- Tulip Siddiq, Member of Parliament for Hampstead and Highgate



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Whilst we're incredibly proud that Highgate Newtown Community Partnership's new building has been recognised widely for its architectural excellence – including a Civic Trust & Accessible Design Award, the Architects' Journal best Community Project, New London Architecture's Overall Winner, and major honours from Inside Housing, Design for Homes and the Camden Design Awards – these accolades tell only part of the story.

The design by RCKa Architects has rightly drawn national attention, but the true impact of this building is found in the daily life it now supports. The greatest achievement is not the collection of awards, but the return of the community to a welcoming, accessible, and inspiring home. What matters most is seeing people, organisations, and essential local services once again flourishing under one roof – reconnecting, growing, and supporting one another in ways no award can fully capture.

We celebrate the recognition with gratitude, including the contribution this building will have made to RCKa being named Architect of the Year by the Architects' Journal, but we celebrate the incredible community even more. This building stands as a testament not just to thoughtful design and Camden Council's commitment, but to the energy, generosity, and resilience of the people who bring it to life every day.

- Dieter Kleiner, Director RCKA

Thank you to everyone involved, and to Absolute Print, for completing the 2025 Impact Review on Monday 16th March 2026.

This milestone reflects the strength of our community and the value of everyone's involvement, collaboration, and shared commitment to making a positive impact.