



ANNUAL REPORT

2022-2023

Hackney
Playbus

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1 Chair's Report
- 2 Our Mission
- 3 Playbus Programme
- 4 Group's Programme
- 5 Returning to the Road
- 7 Outreach & Referrals Programme
- 9 Our Impact: Play & Learning
- 11 Our Impact: Community & Friendship
- 13 Our Impact: Linking to Support Services
- 15 Our Impact: Parenting Confidence
- 16 Volunteer Programme
- 18 Partnerships & System Change
- 19 In Memory of Ian Hastings
- 20 Funders & Donors
- 22 Financial Summary
- 23 Hackney Playbus Team 2022-23



Chair's Report

Like any good bus trip, our Playbus journey this year has been filled with highs and lows, challenges and new adventures. Thankfully, we have an amazing team of staff members, volunteers and trustees, as well as all of the wonderful children, families and community members to join us as we travel.

It was wonderful to see the Playbus back on the road in May with our beautifully painted new bus. Our first outing was a real baptism of fire at the Hackney Half Marathon where so many children and families came along to play and chat, including our team of runners raising money for Hackney Playbus. Like many organisations, the cost of living crisis has made fundraising more difficult this year so we are grateful to the grant making bodies, business partners and generous individuals who have continued to support us.

We have continued to see the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on our young children, and many families have been concerned about their children's development and socialisation. Our team has been working hard to reach out to families who may feel less confident about attending groups and we've continued to support marginalised families as our priority. This has meant that our staff have been working incredibly hard but it has been so rewarding to see children joining in and taking steps towards independence for the first time, as well as parents making friends and connecting with one another.

We were deeply saddened this year by the death of our dear friend and colleague, Ian, who had been such an integral part of our Playbus community for so long. Sharing our stories and memories of Ian brought many tears, but we have also been inspired by his commitment to play, joy and social justice and we hope to continue his legacy for many years to come.

We continue to be a small organisation that makes a big difference. This year we adopted our new strategic plan and we have welcomed a number of new trustees. We have also actively engaged in collaborative working and discussion across the health and social care sector, working together to give every child the best start in life. Please do read more about all of the great work of Hackney Playbus in the following pages of this report.

With thanks to everyone that makes the Playbus so special.



Annabelle Burns
Chair of Trustees

OUR MISSION

Hackney Playbus believes that all children under five living in East London should share the same opportunities to grow, thrive, and reach their potential.

Our mission is to provide play, learning, and support to socially excluded families in East London, to encourage children's early years development, and to strengthen families and communities.

In 2022-23 we embarked on the first year of a new 5 year strategic plan, working towards our strategic goals to:

- Run a sustainable, responsible organisation that can remain financially viable and deliver on our service aims into the future
- Increase engagement and uptake of our services by marginalised families and those with care and support needs
- Ensure we maximise the relevance and impact of our work by involving beneficiaries in service design, delivery and management

Our strategic plan was developed collaboratively with the input of families, Hackney Playbus staff, volunteers and trustees, as well as partners in the community and voluntary sector. Through workshops, surveys, interviews and informal discussions we focused on identifying ways to achieve our strategic goals, looking closely at the barriers that families face in accessing services and ways to overcome them; and at ideas to involve families more in shaping the Hackney Playbus programme.

We really valued the process of putting together this strategic plan as an opportunity to listen, learn and reflect on how to enrich our approach to supporting families, drawing together a wealth of insight and expertise and setting us ever more firmly on a path of bringing the lived experience of families into the heart of everything we do.

152

Playbus Sessions



734

families

Hackney Playbus sessions offer a wealth of stimulating play experiences for babies and children in their early years, both inside and outside the Playbus. It's a welcoming, supportive - and novel - environment, where parents and carers can meet other local families, learn about helpful support services, and play together with their children. We brought the Playbus to 9 different locations this year, in the sweltering heat of the summer as well as during the icy chills of winter, determined to do our best to be a consistent community resource for local families - whatever the season!

80

baby & toddler
groups

1



923

children

We continued to run weekly baby and toddler groups at St Peter's Crypt, providing a welcoming and nurturing environment in which parents and carers with babies and young children could come together to socialise, make friendships and draw support from one another, as well as from our early years team. The groups are truly vibrant, and it has been amazing to see so many families bond over the course of the year. We're enormously grateful to St Peter's Crypt for all their support in hosting us, including the brilliant work that goes into providing lunch for Hackney Playbus families every week in partnership with Humdingers Catering.

RETURNING TO THE ROAD

Hackney Playbus is back on the road! This year we transitioned from our Covid-19 response to a full programme of face-to-face Playbus sessions, settling into a regular weekly programme of 5 Playbus sessions across Hackney in addition to our weekly baby and toddler groups at St Peter's Crypt in De Beauvoir, delivering **152 Playbus sessions and 80 groups in total**. We've really enjoyed being out on the road again with our newly converted and freshly painted Playbus, bringing fun and joy into community spaces once more. Our sessions provide an enabling environment for young children and babies to play and learn, as well as spaces for parents and carers to meet other local families, share their experiences and build support networks, while learning about support services that can help improve their life circumstances. After nearly two years off the road, being together again to work with families in this way has felt so worthwhile, and really special. We're glad to be back.

Our transition to a regular programme of weekly Playbus sessions was carefully considered. We were keen to continue our engagement with families we supported remotely during the pandemic, and to use the hiatus in

our Playbus programme to ensure that those most acutely in need of our support felt empowered to attend our sessions. We used several strategies to achieve this ambition, including developing materials to help families know what to expect at the Playbus and personally inviting families to come along to their local session.

We also made the most of our special talent - being mobile! - to carry out three "stepping stone" Playbus projects as we returned to the road for the very first time since the pandemic. This involved bringing the Playbus directly to families living in temporary accommodation at two homeless hostels, as well as to De Beauvoir Square near St Peter's Crypt for the benefit of families from our groups programme, before starting open Playbus sessions at nearby locations. The aim of these stepping stone sessions was to introduce our provision and build relationships with families to encourage their longer term engagement with our regular programme of Playbus sessions in their local community. At the end of the series of stepping stone sessions, when we moved to Playbus locations nearby - at Rowley Gardens, Gilpin Square and Snake Park - we supported families from the hostels to continue to attend by offering

RETURNING TO THE ROAD

walking groups to the new locations, as well as providing maps with bespoke directions and sending out text messages. All these efforts were underpinned by the knowledge and experience we have accrued over years of outreach work, which takes seriously the barriers that families face in accessing services, including our own. We were glad to put the work in and to return to the road with such a commitment to reaching families who could benefit the most from what Hackney Playbus has to offer.

“The range of toys means that there are exciting ways for toddlers to get moving - bikes, bouncing, digging and exploring the bus.”



OUTREACH & REFERRALS PROGRAMME

We used a targeted approach to promoting Hackney Playbus sessions through our Outreach and Referrals Programme, focusing on direct community outreach at nearby housing estates and to local marginalised groups - including migrants, Orthodox Jewish and Traveller communities - as well as working with a wide range of partners across statutory, community and voluntary sectors to encourage appropriate signposting and referrals to our programme. For example, as a result of our engagement with local partners during the lead up to starting Playbus sessions on Clapton Common, a support worker from a nearby refuge accompanied three women and their children to our first session.

40
referrals

43%

of referred families are homeless or live in insecure housing

38%

of referred families experience mental ill health

We received 40 incoming referrals from 16 partners across 12 teams, including health visitors, social prescribers, migrant sector groups, domestic violence services and Hackney councillors, as well as other community and voluntary sector organisations supporting families in need. By the end of the year, three quarters of families referred to us had engaged with our programme, which is remarkable considering the many challenges they face. Of referred families, at least 43% lived in insecure housing or homeless, 38% experienced mental ill health, 25% survived domestic violence and 23% had been in the UK for less than five years. In terms of ethnicity, 86% of referred parents/carers came from minoritised communities.

OUTREACH & REFERRALS PROGRAMME

Promoting our stepping stone sessions in hostels involved extensive outreach, including targeted door-knocking and flyering, supported in part by Hackney's temporary accommodation team. We also carried out a considerable amount of door-to-door outreach in hostels in connection with starting Playbus sessions at Snake Park, which was selected as a Playbus location in part as a result of a concentration of families in temporary accommodation locally. As a result of our hostels outreach, 102 families living in hostels attended Playbus sessions over the course of the year.



102

families living in
homeless hostels
attended Playbus
sessions

As a result of our Outreach and Referrals Programme, we have made significant progress in engaging a higher proportion of families who are marginalised and have care and support needs - including financial hardship, social isolation and no recourse to public funds. Based on what parents and carers tell us about how they heard about Hackney Playbus, we know that at least 45% of families (for whom we have relevant data) have come to us through our Outreach and Referrals Programme.

OUR IMPACT: PLAY & LEARNING

Our sessions provide an enabling environment for children and babies to explore and learn through play, whether on the Playbus or at our playgroups at St Peter's Crypt. Children who were born during the Covid-19 pandemic have really benefited from the opportunity to play alongside others and from taking part in a range of new activities that many have never experienced before, from painting to singing in a group.

We supported families to play and learn beyond Hackney Playbus too, highlighting easy play activities that can be done at home for no cost, and actively signposting to many other children's activities in Hackney. We also supported families to access other play projects by accompanying families on their first visit, including visits to Easy Rollerz at Hackney Showrooms, Kitchen Club at Comet Children's Centre and Bookstart Storytimes at Dalston Library.



“My child was very shy and now he is starting to open up because of Hackney Playbus”

100%

of parents surveyed say their child has more opportunities for play and learning since taking part in Hackney Playbus projects

97%

of parents surveyed feel their child has more opportunities for physical activity since taking part in Hackney Playbus projects

OUR IMPACT: PLAY & LEARNING



97%

of parents surveyed
feel their children's
social skills have
improved since joining
Hackney Playbus

“He has the opportunity to play with other children at Hackney Playbus. For our child this is the only place he can do all these activities. He’s a lot more friendly and outgoing.”

OUR IMPACT: COMMUNITY & FRIENDSHIP

Our Playbus and groups programme provide important opportunities for finding friendship and a sense of community. Many parents, carers and children who participated in our programmes this year had never been to a group of any kind before; enjoying singing, playing and being with others was a huge step for families who had previously felt isolated and marginalised.

Over time parents and carers have opened up at our sessions and shared experiences with one another, drawing strength from each other and becoming increasingly resilient as they begin to feel supported in the challenges they face.

Seeing strong friendships form between parents and carers who did not know each other previously is a major highlight of Hackney Playbus sessions, one that we're honoured to play a role in.



86%

Have made new friendships with other parents and carers through coming to Hackney Playbus sessions

97%

Have met other parents or carers they could go to if they needed help since taking part in Hackney Playbus projects

“It has been a lot easier to make mum friends in the Playbus environment. I have made lifetime parent friends.”

OUR IMPACT: COMMUNITY & FRIENDSHIP



"All of the parents I have spoken to have given me some wisdom in different areas. So many amazing women with amazing skills and knowledge and amazing minds, who have been through so much, same things as me. I would definitely know who to go to for help."

OUR IMPACT: LINKING TO SUPPORT SERVICES

91%

of families found out about other activities or support services through Hackney Playbus

88

services signposted to

31

children's activities signposted to

Services signposted to cover a range of support needs including:

Housing
Financial Hardship
Mental Health
Domestic Abuse Support
SEND
Migrant Support Services
and more

Many families at Hackney Playbus face difficult circumstances and benefit from learning more about support services at our sessions. We signposted and referred families to a wide range of services depending on their individual circumstances this year, including short term immediate support via referrals to foodbanks and baby banks as well as longer term support from debt advice services, parenting courses and employment programmes, helping families to navigate systems that are often complex and impenetrable.

One of our key ambitions as a charity is to make services more accessible to families experiencing hardship. For this reason we have always actively sought out collaboration and encouraged other organisations to join us at our sessions to bring their services out into the community. This year we enjoyed visits on a quarterly basis from a speech and language therapist at the Playbus, as well as monthly visits from a health visitor at our baby and toddler groups, giving parents and carers the opportunity to ask questions about their children's health and development in a setting where they feel comfortable and supported.

"Playbus is a unique space where people can attend according to their needs and to socialise with people from all walks of life. It is a convivial and happy place where all are welcome, irrespective of station. As a health visitor we see people at Hackney Playbus we could never hope to access in a booked GP clinic and the power-dynamic is wholly different. I'm only there once a month yet in that brief window I can easily see upwards of 12 families. We have productive conversations and cover all manner of things. I can pick up things for colleagues in other teams, and to have some overlap like this helps everyone out; staff and families alike!"

Ciaran Dickinson
Health Visitor

OUR IMPACT: LINKING TO SUPPORT SERVICES

“It’s nice to be able to talk to a health visitor at Hackney Playbus if you have any concerns about your children. It’s not always easy to get an appointment at the doctors.”



“The speech language therapist helped me understand that it was okay that my son would communicate some words verbally and some through sign language, and the fact that he was attempting to communicate was most important and that he would eventually use his speech more. It was very reassuring.”

OUR IMPACT: PARENTING CONFIDENCE

Our programme supports parents and carers in their knowledge and understanding of children's early learning and development, and strengthens their skills and confidence in parenting. Playing, singing and reading together at our sessions gives parents and carers inspiration and confidence to play with their children at home. Parents and carers learn strategies to support their children's healthy development, as well as ways to manage the challenges of parenthood and look after themselves. They learn from each

other, from our staff team and from visiting health professionals such as health visitors and speech and language therapists. We see parents and carers who are experiencing significant hardship draw strength from the solidarity and community that they find at Playbus sessions, while at the same time developing confidence in their own parenting skills as they learn more about the developmental norms of babies and toddlers through sharing experiences with each other, observing other children in play, and talking to our early years team.

“It has made me a super first time mom since I joined Hackney Playbus sessions.”



97%

of parents surveyed have more ideas about ways to play with their children at home since taking part in Hackney Playbus projects

97%

of parents surveyed say that Hackney Playbus sessions helps them to bond with their children

VOLUNTEER PROGRAMME

A wonderful group of volunteers have supported Hackney Playbus this year across both Playbus and group sessions, and much more besides including administration and outreach. Our active core of volunteers are very much part of our early years team and have developed amazing relationships with parents, carers and children over the course of the year. We were really pleased to welcome a Playbus mum to our volunteering team this year, who joined us when her child graduated from Playbus sessions to nursery. Having such a dependable and consistent group of volunteers at sessions has been truly wonderful, helping us to have more focused time with parents and carers who may need advice or support, while volunteers support children in their play and learning.

12

volunteers

“I have found volunteering at the Hackney Playbus really rewarding. Everyone has been really welcoming, I’ve learnt a great deal and had lots and lots of fun playing with the kids!”

Volunteering with Hackney Playbus can be a great opportunity to gain knowledge and experience of working in the community with children and families. We were pleased to offer training opportunities for volunteers in Emergency Paediatric First Aid as well as courses on supporting families with children who have special educational needs (SEND) delivered by Hackney Ark. One of our volunteers has now got a part time paid role in a nursery in Hackney, and attributes this achievement to the confidence she gained whilst volunteering with Hackney Playbus. We’re very pleased for her, and we’re glad to know that volunteers love their experience volunteering with Hackney Playbus as much as we value them being part of the team.

VOLUNTEER PROGRAMME



‘It’s been so different, I come home and my mum looks at me and says, ‘You’ve had a good day’ and I’ll say ‘I’ve had a LOVELY day!’”

“I love volunteering with the Playbus team. They are such a warm and friendly bunch, which comes across in the way that the sessions are run. It creates a space for the children and parents (and me!) that is inviting, fun, supportive and safe.”

373

hours volunteered

PARTNERSHIPS & SYSTEM CHANGE

Hackney Playbus has always worked closely with a variety of local partners in order to share information and good practice and reach the families who need support. Faced with an ongoing erosion of public funding and showing a welcome recognition and respect for their energetic and innovative local communities and organisations, L.B. Hackney has made a public commitment to a partnership approach to supporting residents. This, hand in hand with a recognition that organisations like Hackney Playbus are in many instances simply better at reaching some of the residents who are the most marginalised, led to a decision to select Hackney Playbus as one of 20 voluntary sector organisations in the borough to share learning and try and make systemic changes to the way the council works.

We regularly attend Neighbourhood and other forum meetings in the borough, talking with other groups and services, sharing our insights and always keeping an eye out for opportunities to work in partnership. We recently were able to bring the introduction of Family Hubs to the attention of the wider voluntary sector, not only contributing our own view point (outreach, outreach, outreach!) but encouraging others to be a part of the process too. We were

already leading the way on reaching children and families in Hackney's hostels and have started a long overdue conversation about this with other significant partners including Children's Centres, as well as working to link up partners engaging families in temporary accommodation - informally and through the Hackney TAAG (Temporary Accommodation Action Group). This year we secured funding from Sport England as part of the Kings Park Moving Together programme which has brought together around 20 local organisations to share ideas about how to improve the health of residents in the south east of the borough again with a strong commitment to shared learning.



IN MEMORY OF IAN HASTINGS

We are deeply saddened by the loss of our dear friend Ian Hastings, who died on 5th December 2022.

Ian was best friend to us all, big and small. He was a kind and gentle soul whose generosity knew no bounds.

Even though Ian was the most modest of men, he was a huge figure in the Hackney Playbus community, bringing fun, joy, laughter and support to so many families, colleagues and friends throughout his many years of work and play at Hackney Playbus.

We are so grateful for the time we had with Ian, for everything he taught us, for the kindnesses he showed us, for his playful spirit and for his calm, reassuring presence. Ian will always be a part of Hackney Playbus, remembered by us all with so much love.

You can see tributes to Ian and add your own to his memorial page here:

https://padlet.com/ianhastings/Ian_Hastings

“Make a nobody feel like a somebody,
Make your voice heard,
Make the small things big,
Make someone smile”

Marianne Baum



FUNDERS & DONORS

2022-23

DONATIONS INCOME

The accounts presented in this annual report are from the previous financial year 2021-22, showing the tail end of a successful crowdfunding campaign we had run the previous year in order to purchase and convert our new Playbus and banking a further £22,607 on top of the £34,567 reported in the previous annual report bringing the total raised through our 'Lets Build a Playbus' crowdfunder to £57,174. On top of that we secured £22,500 through the sale of Tilly our previous Playbus, leaving us for a nursery school in Devon.

GRANTS INCOME

We benefited in 2021-22 from £10,470 in furlough payments from the government although most of the staff team continued to work throughout the pandemic delivering services online and making play videos.

All this was just as well as it was one of our harder years for raising grants to deliver services, alleviated by the availability of some 'emergency funding' as a result of Covid and our overall income dropped from £232,638 the previous year to £187,451.

This financial year 2022-23 sees us continuing to face some difficulties finding suitable grant funding to deliver the services we know are needed, nevertheless recent substantial grants from Garfield Weston Foundation and Reaching Communities (The Big Lottery) suggest that suitable opportunities are once again becoming available.

EVENTS INCOME

Decimated during Covid-19, Events bookings are starting to look up. We have taken on a regular booking with St Nicholas Cole Abbey in Blackfriars which helped us through some of our most difficult periods and are about to launch into our second Hackney Half marathon since the pandemic! 2022 to 2023 saw booking income rise from £1,080 to £8,325, two thirds of former levels. Summer events are all back on and bookings for the summer of 2023 are looking promising.

Grants this year (2022-23) came from:

- London Borough of Hackney Community Infrastructure Programme
- BBC Children in Need
- Sunbabies Nursery Trust
- Awards for All (The National Lottery)
- South Hackney Parochial Charities
- Hackney Parochial Charities
- West Hackney Parochial Charities
- The Masonic Charitable Foundation
- Charity of Sir Richard Whittington
- Kings Park Moving Together (Sport England)
- The Peter Stebbings Memorial Charity
- The Albert Hunt Trust
- Merchant Taylors' Foundation

FUNDERS & DONORS 2022-23

We are deeply grateful to many generous individuals, local supporters and companies who have donated funds during 2022-23, including Volunteer Centre Hackney who nominated us for a donation from the Hackney Citizen, and Bharti Shah who donated generously towards our travel contribution fund to support families to attend our baby and toddler groups. Generous donations also came from:

The Victoria Park Singers
Gareth Upe
Dentons LLP
Equal Experts
LiveRamp
Fresh Relevance
LEYF London Fields Nursery

We'd like to say a huge thank you to our regular supporters who make monthly donations throughout the year, helping to keep the wheels turning at Hackney Playbus.

Our deepest gratitude to Joy Hastings and to all of Ian's family who requested that donations in Ian's memory be made to Hackney Playbus. We would also like to thank the families of Lesley May Akomeah and Megan Down, who also kindly requested donations to Hackney Playbus in memoriam.

On behalf of the children and families we support at Hackney Playbus - thank you, thank you, thank you!



FINANCIAL SUMMARY

INCOMING RESOURCES

	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total
Donations	27089		27089
Charitable Activities	4080	128305	132385
Government Furlough		10470	10470
Bank interest	7		7
Profit on Sale of Assets	17500		17500
	48676	138775	187451

RESOURCES EXPENDED

	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total
Charitable Activities	69309	138775	208084
Capacity Building	0	0	
	69309	138775	208084

The independent examination of the accounts was carried out in accordance with the Independent Examiner:

David Zoboki of Spartan Accounting Group Ltd.
71-75 Shelton Street
Covent Garden
London
WC2H 9JQ

BALANCE SHEET

As at 31st March 2022

Fixed Assets:

Tangible Fixed Assets 47,398

Current Assets:

Debtors

Cash at bank and in hand 72473

Total Current Assets 72473

Liabilities:

Creditors amounts falling due within 1 year -3061

Net Current Assets 69412

Total Net Assets 116,810

Funds

Unrestricted funds 97668

Restricted funds 19142

Total funds 116,810

HACKNEY PLAYBUS TEAM 2022-23



STAFF

Alex Drăgan
Amjid Hussain
Anja Nyberg
Ann Middleton
Claire Kelly
Claire Lindsay
Cjay Knighor
Giorgia Lafram
Ian Hastings
Jaime Dowling
Jayne Garner
Jenni Gregory
Keith Dear
Misba Patel
Sabana Siddique
Sara Blakemore
Simona Attardi
Tim Purcell
Georgina Robertson-Signor

TRUSTEES

Annabelle Burns
Cllr. Antoinette Bramble
Emma Bridge
Eva Brooks
Julie Anisiobi
Julie Le Bon
Karen Davey
Matt Churchill
Mine Oguz
Stuart Hunt
Tim Wooldridge

VOLUNTEERS

Alex Deery
Andrew Lightfoot
Barney Grace
Elias Amanuel
Faizah Khan
Jermaine Darcy
Liz Cox
Natasha Shah
Natalie Hyde
Nicole Tinti
Rob Jones
Ula Smith

HACKNEY HALF MARATHON RUNNERS

Benjamin Moyon
Brenda Peuch
Caitlin Dempsey
Geoff Whitman
Kal Chottai
Kibri Dei
Matt Churchill
Penny Madsen
Rebecca De Hoest

With thanks to the whole Hackney Playbus team for their endless kindness, care and commitment to supporting young families in Hackney and beyond.



Hackney Playbus

Charity No. 1163792

Kingsmead Kabin
8-9 Kingsmead Way
London
E9 5QG
www.hackneyplaybus.org
Charity No. 1163792