

When you are older there is ~~NO~~ time for fun.

# Connect Hackney

what we've learned in phase 1 : 2015 – 2018

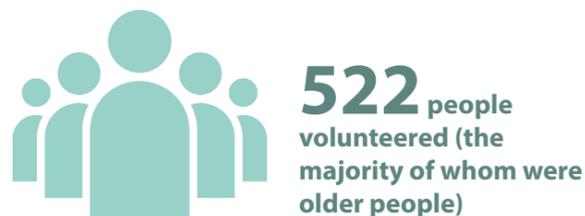
Connect Hackney aims to improve the wellbeing of Hackney residents aged 50 and over by reducing or preventing loneliness and isolation.



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

# Connect Hackney – Our work in phase 1 : 2015-2018

Connect Hackney is a six year partnership (2015-2021) funded by the Big Lottery Fund which aims to improve the wellbeing of Hackney residents aged 50 and over by reducing and preventing isolation. Between 2015 – 2018, Connect Hackney invested over £1 million in 23 projects to reduce the social isolation of older people.

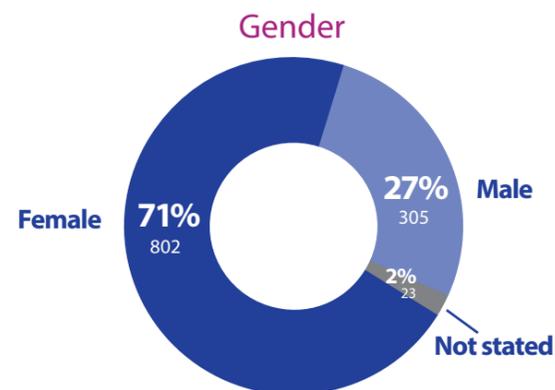
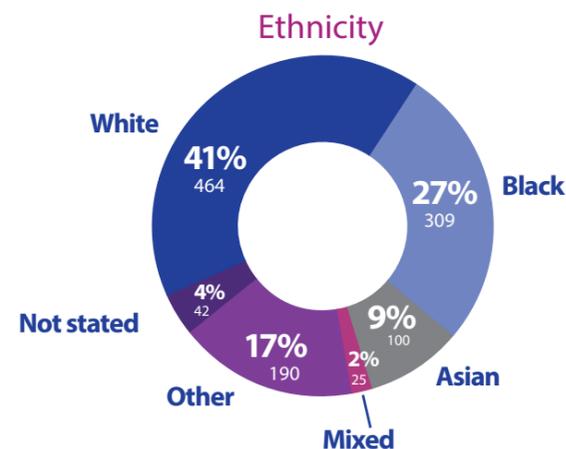
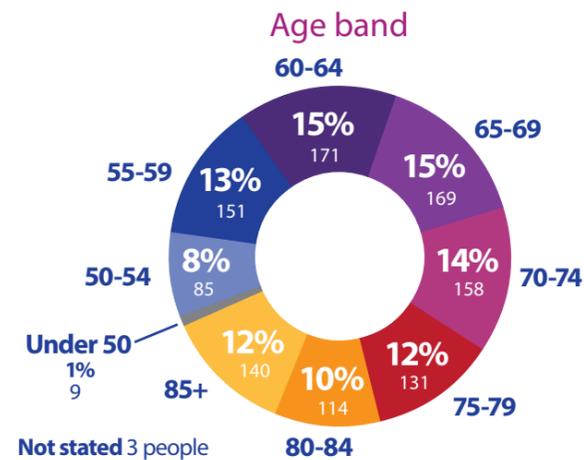


**Outcomes information**

Data collected from older people participating in the projects shows us that the projects had a positive impact on them. Older people have:

- Had more **social contact** with family and non-family members
- Reduced their **social isolation**
  - Improved their **health and wellbeing**
  - Felt that their **quality of life** has improved

## Demographic information of participants



### CASE STUDY 1

#### The importance of weekly activities, low key practical support and making room for friendships to grow

The City and Hackney Carers Centre ran an informal weekly IT drop-in where people could socialise while learning digital skills.

Mrs C is in her mid 80's. She's an active woman who regularly attends community activities, but before coming to the IT project she hadn't made any friends or acquaintances at the different groups and sessions she went to. The weekly contact provided by the drop-in and its emphasis on social inclusion, as well IT skills, meant that she quickly became familiar with staff and got to know other participants. She now feels there is a place to go every week where she can chat with people, make friends, learn new skills and get help with small day to day issues. Mrs C says her quality of life has improved and she feels part of a wider family. She has often said that the IT drop-in is a lifeline for her and something to look forward to.

**"It really makes me feel very good to go somewhere and be with people. Then I don't mind coming home to my own home."**

**"If I have a group to go to, I've taken myself away from the pain for a while."**

**"I wanted to feel a sense that I am doing something worthwhile for myself and my community."**

### CASE STUDY 2

#### How a single supportive relationship can lead to big changes and a bigger life

City and Hackney Mind ran a befriending service for people with mental health problems.

Mr L was referred to the befriending scheme after he had received a diagnosis of a debilitating life condition. He was very depressed and anxious and rarely saw anybody. In order to help him overcome his isolation and reconnect with the outside world he was matched with a volunteer who shared his interest in history. Together they went to see the different history exhibitions at museums around London. At first Mr L's speech impediment meant it was hard for their relationship to develop but this was soon overcome and their communication got better and better. They developed a great befriending relationship built on their experiences of mental health and their common interests. In a very short amount of time Mr L felt much more confident about going out on his own and was motivated to try out new activities - he found a cooking class which he attended on his own where he made new friends for the first time in a long time. His befriender also noted a difference in his confidence and willingness to leave his comfort zone. Mr L is planning on volunteering at the cooking class when it ends.

# Our findings – what helps to reduce isolation

## What we've learned

By talking to older people and partners over the last three years, this is what we've learnt so far, about the best chance of reducing and preventing isolation amongst older people.

- We all need to **think differently about older age** – by recognising and challenging ageist assumptions about how older people should behave and what they want and enjoy;
- Think **beyond bingo** - design activities with older people and be open to running different activities than what is traditionally on offer;
- Support should be **personal and flexible** – services need to be able to respond to individual needs and build on opportunities;
- Make room for **socialising and fun/good times** by providing space and time on a regular basis for people to get together and develop friendships;
- See **London as an asset** full of low cost days out and free attractions that can be explored together – these special, shared experiences help people bond;
- **Explore the transport issue** – problems with 'transport' take many forms, including issues navigating the transport system, the inaccessibility of vehicles, and difficulties leaving the house. It's important to be clear what the issue is before coming up with a solution;
- Have a supportive **therapeutic approach** which can help people manage the challenges of ageing such as feelings of physical vulnerability, bereavement and health conditions.



## Our providers:

Action on Hearing Loss  
Bikur Cholim  
City & Hackney Carers  
City & Hackney MIND  
deafPLUS  
Hackney Elderly Association  
Hackney People First Hands Inc  
The Huddleston Centre  
Hoxton Health  
IMECE Women's Centre  
Meet N Greet  
Natural Presence  
St Joseph's Hospice  
Tikva Hope  
Wise Age  
Age UK East London  
Ezra Umarpeh  
Groundwork  
Hackney Community Transport  
Peabody  
CH Senior Media Group  
City & Hackney Carers  
LGBT+



**“I get out and about more now than ever. I have my bus pass and I use it. I go everywhere, get to Southend in summer and up to Wood Green.”**

**“I was probably depressed, feeling achy and getting older with the sadness of growing old. I was getting more isolated and didn't have energy. I'd recommend this [mindfulness] to everybody, including children, to learn ways of managing and some life transforming skills. I am happier now and even food tastes better.”**

## Contact information

**We are continuing to explore different ways to reduce and prevent isolation locally. You can find out more about our work and how you can get involved at [www.connecthackney.org.uk](http://www.connecthackney.org.uk) or by calling 020 7923 1962.**