

## **Dalston Community First**



### **'Re-imagining Dalston'**

### **Dalston Community First Plan**

*A Hackney Unites report looking at the changing face of Dalston from the view of the local community*



### **Dalston Community First – the background**

Dalston Community First was established in 2012 to bring together the local community and improve the facilities and environment in Dalston through the Community First Neighbourhood Matched Fund.

Community First, an £80m government-funded programme will run for four years, until March 2015. It will help communities come together through new and existing community groups, to identify their strengths and local priorities, plan for their future and become more resilient.

Community First is a ‘matched’ fund programme, which means that every £1 provided in funding must be matched by a similar amount of in-kind donations (this means donations of cash, goods and services, or people’s time). The funding consists of the £30m Neighbourhood Match Fund small grants programme for some of the most deprived areas in the country and a national £50m Endowment Match Challenge.

The Neighbourhood Match Fund will use the £30m fund to encourage people in deprived communities to give their time and expertise to local projects, to raise money and help make their local area a better place to live.

Dalston Ward funding as part of the programme:

Year one: £5,624

Year two: £8,489

Year three: £8,488

Year four: £11,309

Each year a panel of local people will set funding priorities for the ward and make recommendations about how the funding should be spent to Community Development Foundation, who will administer the grants.

**The panel:**

There are seven members of the panel, made up of representatives from local groups and residents. These are:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Representing</b>
Mary Beckles	Residents of ward
Roxanna Dawkins	Residents of ward
Reverend Rose Hudson- Wilkin	Community Groups
Talia-Jordan Lewis	Community Groups
Yvonne Barnet	Local public sector organisations
Dave Holland	Local voluntary sector organisations
Michelle Gregory	Local councillor
Leslie Laniyan	Local business

Email [dcfpost@outlook.com](mailto:dcfpost@outlook.com) if you are interested in the work of the panel or becoming a member.

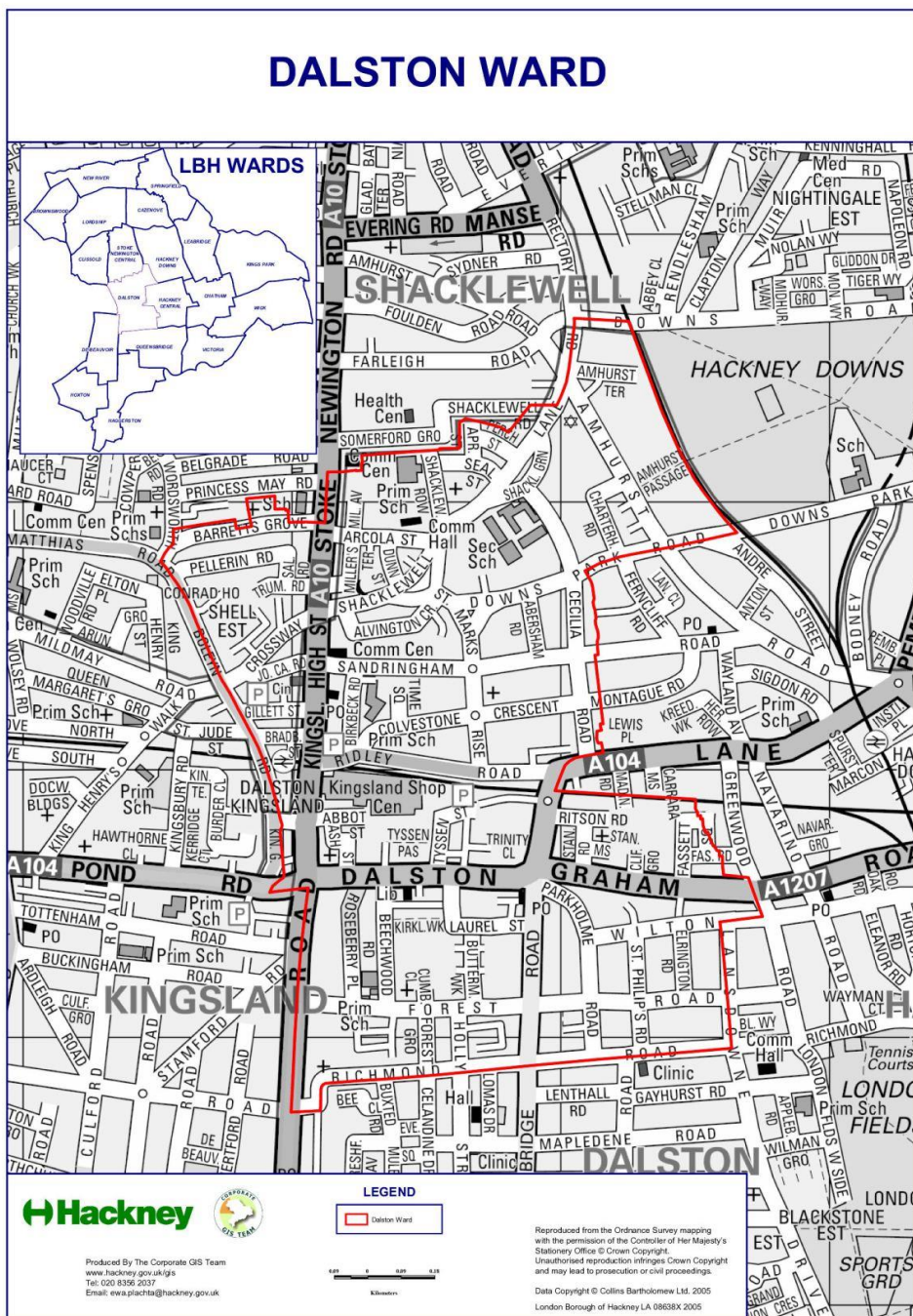
**Agreed ward priorities 2013 -14**

Ongoing priority

*Bring different communities within the ward closer together through events and Volunteering.*

## Priorities for this 2013-14

1. Increase support for older people living alone in the home and in the community.
2. Reduce incidents of drug offences and violent crime through drug awareness, personal safety and anti-violence programmes.
3. Increase the range of activities available for children and young people to play and learn new skills.
4. Reduce the number of families living in poverty through skilled work opportunities.



## **Existing Community activity**

Projects Approved

2011/12

Perpetual Odyssey – £2,000

The project will bring communities together through cultural performance workshops for local children.

Hackney Unites – £1,400

The project will map the community resources within the ward through volunteers drawn from the unemployed residents.

2012/13

Hackney Unites - £1000

The project will establish a private tenant's campaign group through volunteers drawn from the unemployed residents.

Youth Skills Network - £2,484

The project will aim to equip aspiring young individuals with the skills & confidence to become E-Moguls.

Black & Ethnic Minority Arts Network - £1,000

Hackney Unites – £1,500

The project will undertake preparatory work to deliver a week-long community festival.

House of AMAU – £980

The project will encourage local residents to volunteer with a literature development program.

Black and Ethnic Minority Arts Network – £2,055

The project will stage a creative jobs faire for local residents.

Arcola Theatre – 1,275

The project will encourage local residents to engage in local recycling programs

Colvestone Family and Staff Association – £275

Towards the cost of the school fair

2013/14

Daslton Eastern Curve Garden – £2,000

The project will establish a programme of outdoor educational activities for young children.

ReachOut FC – £1884

The project will provide weekly football training for young people.

East London Fox Access – £1000

The project will provide fresh food delivery to local elderly residents.

Alevi Centre – £1000

The project will provide a series of Jewellery making classes for Turkish women.

### **Introduction**

From the shops, to the schools to the open-spaces, the face of Dalston is changing rapidly. In recent years many millions of pounds of public and private money have been invested in the area. Despite the influx of residents who can afford to live in the new developments of Dalston, some parts of the ward remain the most deprived areas of the country.

Hackney Unites, a local coalition for social justice, has been researching local opinion to ensure that local people have a voice and can influence the changes happening in their area. The need for a strong, inclusive voice that can make a positive difference to the future of the area is clear

### **Gathering Insight**

To conduct this research, supported by Dalston Community First, we asked local residents, businesses and our many supporters to give their views about the changing face of the area.

Through public meetings and focus groups alongside consultation with tenants', residents and local workers and faith groups we gathered people's opinions. We also utilised on-line social networking campaigns to get the widest range of opinions. Campaign tools included Facebook, Twitter, Youtube and Survey Monkey. Leaflets were distributed door-to-door on Dalston estates, through faith and community groups, open spaces and at the local Dalston CLR James library and the job centre and an innovative film project to maximise engagement.

### **The Film Project**

People were encouraged to either send us film from their smart phone, or participate in a series of 'vox-pop' sessions, where we filmed them. Four vox-pop sessions took place during the period of the research.

### **Who took part?**

We are confident that our research captured a snapshot of Dalston as it is today and what the diverse communities think about that. From business holders to community groups and faith organisations to those involved in the night time economy, we sought out views from everyone.

*Special thanks for their time and input to:*

*The Eastern Curve Garden*

*The Trinity Centre*

*Gillette Square businesses*

*Hackney CVS*

*Dalston Square businesses and residents*

*The People of Dalston – old and new*



**What we asked:**

- What do you think are the most important issues affecting Dalston?

**What they said:**

*The need for better quality housing in large quantities*

*Better quality community facilities e.g. schools and arts centres*

*Better quality architecture and town-scape*

**What else they said:**

‘Hackney has changed considerably since I moved here, especially class wise. However there are still large estates / working -class, unemployed with severe hardship needs.’

‘We need to stop the criminalisation of our young people.’

‘ I love Hackney.’

‘I was working for the Carers Centre in Dalston. We and we have a lot of local people coming in to use our services but we had to move out because of the increase in property rental for community organisations. I have a feeling in future less services will be available for Dalston residents if community organisations are forced out of the area.’

‘We need to stop developers form building high rise buildings and need to press the council to create social housing.’

‘We need to create green spaces for children and ensure existing ones are maintained – Save the Easten Curve Garden!’

‘The council need to facilitate create small businesses instead of big supermarkets and coffee chains.’

**Issues viewed as very important:**

- Affordable rates for local businesses
- Occupational opportunities for disabled people
- Development - planning generally especially decent affordable/social housing
- Tree planting
- Community spaces/ services
- Saving the Eastern Curve Garden
- Making sure that any developments benefit the existing community
- Supporting local businesses rather than chains
- Get residents to give back to the community we live in
- Bridging the gap between new residents and old
- Crumbling Georgian housing between junction and Graham Road
- Over tall and extensive development plans for Kingsland shopping centre
- Preservation and conservation of the Peace Mural, Dalston Lane
- Restriction in number and height of towers - accord to Local Plan (The proposed building of more high rises on Kingsland Road)
- Preserve open spaces
- Establish Hackney Unite as an official Hackney consultee
- Affordable housing for local people
- Limit the amount of new developments.
- Cap private rents and abolish bedroom tax
- Sharing of resources and profits for all people in Dalston.
- More public / green space
- Provision of space for local enterprises at affordable rents
- Housing - no social and way too much development
- More youth centres activities for young people
- Better collaboration between all communities

**Dalston a community in transition.****Introduction to Dalston, Hackney, London**

Dalston is situated at the heart of the inner London Borough of Hackney (see figure 1) and historically it has been a place of inward migration, not only from other parts of London and the UK, but from all over the world. It has often been the first stopping off point for people seeking asylum and refuge from countries facing war and economic hardship. There are strong Jewish, Kurdish, Turkish, Cypriot, Vietnamese and black Caribbean, African and more recently Polish communities that have, over the last century and decades, made their home in this London borough. The 'Other White' population as describe by the 2011 Census increased by 60 per cent between 2001 and 2011, and is now the second largest ethnic group. Hackney is now the 6th most diverse borough in London.

Dalston is a vibrant fast changing area of Hackney. After the war for nearly 40 years Hackney's population was in decline, and properties in Dalston were relatively cheap either to rent or to purchase.



In the 50s and 60s traditional light industry (including the shoe and rag trade) was in decline and the local housing stock was not well cared for. Into this area moved a significant number of migrants from the Windrush (and subsequent) generations. At one time Dalston rivalled Brixton as a centre of the African Caribbean Community with Ridley Road market and its many Caribbean night clubs. It was a cultural hub, the home of the Four Aces, as well as numerous sound systems and carnival clubs.

Hackney's diversity and multiculturalism are the main factors contributing to residents feeling proud of Hackney. In part this is a result of Hackney's long history of immigration and welcoming people into the borough, which has resulted in local neighbourhoods that are very diverse where people have an opportunity to mix and meet people from different religious and ethnic backgrounds. The sub-Hackney area of Dalston reflects this diversity

**Figure 1: London map showing the position of Hackney**



Nestling on the edge of the City of London, Dalston is just 2.5 miles directly north from the Bank of England and covers an area of 0.93 square kilometers (see figure 2). The contrast between the wealth of the City and the neighbourhood of Dalston can be stark. Often considered one of the most deprived areas of London (and the UK) on many indices (health, wellbeing, education), Dalston itself is also full of contrast, as the area has begun to gentrify over the last decade or so. Today, you are likely to see some of the most expensive houses in the county sitting side by side some of the poorest social housing.

**Figure 2: Map of Hackney showing the location of Dalston**



### Population

The population of Dalston at the last Census in 2011 was 14,799, up from 10,359 in the 2001 Census. Although the 2013 Census population data for the ward broken down by age are not yet available for Dalston, the data from Hackney as a whole shows that this is a young borough with 33.6 per cent of people under the age of 24 compared to 32.1 percent from the London region and 30.7 for England (see table 1). The younger population is also expected to grow until 2016, but is expected to level off in later years

**Table 1: Census data 2011**

	Dalston	Hackney	London	England
	Ward	London Borough	Region	Country
All Persons; All Ages	14799	247200	8204400	53107200
Males; All Ages	~	49.6	49.4	49.2
Females; All Ages	~	50.4	50.6	50.8
All Persons; Aged 0-15	~	20.7	19.9	18.9
All Persons; Aged 16-24	~	12.9	12.2	11.8
All Persons; Aged 25-49	~	48.1	42.4	34.8
All Persons; Aged 50-64 (Males), 50-59 (Females)	~	9.7	12.3	15
All Persons; Aged 65 and Over (Males), 60 and Over (Females)	~	8.6	13.2	19.5

Source: ONS 2013

Of the 14,799 people living in Dalston 8,712 were born in the UK and the remaining 6,087 were born overseas from a wide range of countries.

## **Ethnicity**

Hackney (and Dalston) is very diverse in terms of people from different ethnic backgrounds. While 56 percent of the population of Dalston describes itself from 'white' ethnic groups (36% white British and 20% white 'other'), the remaining population is comprised of people from a wide range of diverse backgrounds. Those describing themselves as African comprise the largest ethnic group in Dalston (11.2%), followed by Black Caribbean (8.5%) and 10 per cent for all 'Asian' groups (India, Pakistan, Bangladeshi and Chinese). Turks and Kurds also make up a sizable population but it is difficult to estimate their number<sup>1</sup> as they are not adequately recorded in Census data. Other research, from the Local Authority however estimated their numbers to be around 25,000 across Hackney and a sizeable number of Turks and Kurds live in the Dalston area where they often run small business.

Despite being in a minority, the area has a strong 'Black' community. While Dalston has a high turnover of population, the Black Caribbean community in particular has remained a stable and enduring presence. A strong sense of local identity, coupled with the security of Council accommodation, and the availability of (relatively) affordable private sector housing, meant that there were strong reasons to stay, and few reasons to leave, and so generations of families have remained in the area.

## **Employment and unemployment**

The nature of employment in Dalston has changed significantly over the last 50 years when small garment factories were much in evidence. Today the main employers in Dalston are small business—mainly cafes, bars, nightclubs and small retail outlets. In the last few years, hotels have arrived on the scene catering for the vibrant night-time economy which is now in evidence most evenings and particularly at weekends. The night-time influx of those seeking to party and enjoy themselves late into the evening has caused some tensions between those 'party people' and local residents. Many longstanding residents in the area also feel they are being ignored and forced out of the area as new high rise flats are built to accommodate new residents who are able to afford mortgages or sky high rents on the developments.

Just over 65% of Dalston residents are classified as economically active, which is low compared to Hackney and London as a whole, although this is likely to be an underestimate as other research has shown that there is significant employment in the informal economy<sup>2</sup>. The unemployment figure is 6.8% (higher than Hackney as a whole) with 4 per cent of people of working age who have either never worked or are long terms unemployed. Living in an inner city borough which is experiencing considerable rise in house prices and where boutique coffee shops and 'artisan' stores are replacing traditional cafes and pound-shops is making life difficult for those with limited disposable income and is likely to push such people out of the area in the years to come as the area increasingly gentrifies.

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<sup>1</sup> Survey questions relating to nationality provide Kurds with little option other than to define themselves as Turkish, Iraqi, Iranian, or Syrian. As such, Kurdish identity is not only subsumed under an ethnic categorisation that does not distinguish from other minority ethnic groups

<sup>2</sup> Holgate, J., Keles, J., Kumarappan, L. and Pollert, A. (2012) 'Kurdish migrant workers in London: experiences from an 'invisible' community.'. *Journal of Migration and Ethnic Studies*. 38 (4): 595-612.

Yet despite this Dalston's profile from the 2011 Census shows a greater proportion of workers in managerial, professional and technical roles (68.4%), and fewer administrators, service sector employees and those in elementary occupations than the borough average (56.4) and the England (41.2%).<sup>3</sup>

### **Deprivation indices**

Hackney remains the second most deprived local authority in England on the Government's Indices of Multiple Deprivation and all of the wards are in the top ten percent most deprived in the country. Dalston itself is 21st most deprived ward out of 621 wards in London (2013). These are some of the key figures.

### ***Fuel***

Hackney has the second highest fuel poverty rate of all London boroughs. Within Hackney, Dalston has a slightly higher than average rate<sup>4</sup> and it is likely that figures have risen since 2008 as utility prices have risen during the recession.

### ***Teenage pregnancy***

In Hackney, the annual conception rate among women aged under 18 was 58 per 1,000 teenage women aged 15-17 (between 2006 and 2008). This is considerably higher than the average for England of 41 conceptions per 1,000 teenage women. In Dalston, the rate was 55 per 1,000 teenage women (around 9 conceptions per year).<sup>5</sup>

### ***Educational achievement***

Three quarters (74%) of children in Hackney achieved Level 4 or better in English at Key Stage 2 in 2009. The success rate was 66 per cent in Dalston, below the Hackney average and the national average of 80 per cent.

### ***Childhood obesity***

In Hackney, a quarter (24%) of all Year 6 school pupils are obese, higher than the national rate of 18%. In Dalston, 22 per cent of Year 6 pupils resident in the ward are obese.

### **Dalston: Nowhere near as grim as its reputation suggests<sup>6</sup>**

In making the case for Dalston, The Guardian newspaper tells us that Dalston is not a bad as its reputation: 'Dalston has come a long way since the 90s, when Patrick Wright wrote A Journey Through Ruins, his magnificent history of post-war Britain seen through the dusty arse-end of London – aka Dalston. It is now, says some style mag or other, London's new Notting Hill(!) and loft-style apartments at £400k a pop have invaded, the early symptoms of extreme gentrificationitis'. Dalston's crime rate

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<sup>3</sup> Source: ONS 2011 Census, % all usual residents 16-74 in employment

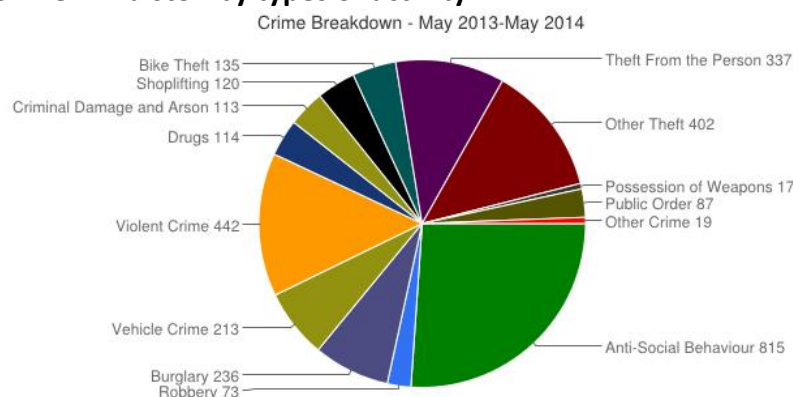
<sup>4</sup> Households in fuel poverty in Hackney (2008)

<sup>5</sup> Conceptions among women aged under 18 years: rate per 1,000 women aged 15-17 (2006-2008)

<sup>6</sup> The Guardian, Saturday 24 October 2009

has fallen drastically over the last 10 years. The BBC reported that crime fell by more than 34% in six months in 2011 and violent crime was reported as fallen by 61% during that period. The police claimed that falls were due to a reduction of drugs available in the area, meaning users are not resorting to crime locally to feed their habits.<sup>7</sup>

**Figure 3: Crime in Dalston by types of activity**



However, Dalston still ranks 131 in the Metropolitan Police's Neighbourhood crime league table out of 155 London wards.

### Accelerating Change

Like much of Hackney, Dalston's community has always been in transition. However, the pace of change has recently accelerated. The increasing number of developments of 'luxury flats' combined with a new conspicuous affluence has transformed the retail outlets in the neighbourhood. Where once there were 'greasy spoon cafés' there are now 'boutique coffee shops', where once there were local pubs there are now wine bars and second hand charity stores, have given way to vintage clothing stores. Where previously the high street had adequately served the poor, it now feels as if it is orientated towards the wealthy and large swathes of the established community feels priced out of their own high street, the pubs, bars and cafes.

Meanwhile the once affordable housing in the Victorian terraced streets has over the years become fashionable and street properties are now beyond the affordability of many of the traditional local community. Consequently, many local people, black and white complain that their children cannot afford to live in the area they grew up in.

The issue has been compounded by the benefits of significant inward investment, particularly in transport infrastructure and the Olympic effect (Hackney was an Olympic borough).

While much of this is good news, the problem is that the existing community often does not feel that it is benefitting from this influx of investment and the new wealth.

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-15905728>

There does not appear to be a 'trickle down' effect and there is no sense in which new jobs are providing opportunities, particularly for the young people of the community.

There is a real sense of the traditional established community both being 'left behind' as Hackney gets more affluent, but also being 'squeezed out'. While the area is getting more affluent, this is primarily because more affluent people are moving in, the poor (and Dalston has substantial pockets of poverty) are not seeing new opportunities for social mobility, but rather are increasingly forced to leave the area as house prices in particular drive them out.

Overlaid with this is the ethnic dimension. Dalston which once challenged Brixton and Notting Hill as the centre of the British black community (Notting Hill may have had the Mangrove, but Dalston had the Four Aces) is becoming both more affluent and more white.

The fact that the new arrivals are predominantly white reinforces a sense of the failure of regeneration to create social mobility for the communities in the area.

The nature of the work of some of the new comers also creates challenges to creating an integrated, inclusive community. With, in some blocks, many residents working abroad or away from home for considerable periods.

Dalston then is an area that is in transition and a community that is being disrupted by that transition. We see our responsibility to be to assist the community to address the transition, embrace the new arrivals and emerge stronger than before.



## **Priorities**

The Dalston Plan priorities are considered within the context of the Hackney's overall community objective:

To foster good relations by building a strong sense of community, neighborliness and pride

This overarching goal is one which is particularly pertinent in Dalston, and the following are designed to enhance that overall goal.

### **This plan highlights several key priorities**

#### **Business support**

The grant programme will support projects that assist the retention of space for small local businesses to counter the findings that local small retailers are being forced out with owners seeking to profit from the growing popularity of Dalston by raising rent to levels only big chains can afford.

#### **Community cohesion**

Aware of how change can be disruptive to a sense of community, and aware that demographic change creates both new barriers and opportunities, we will support those in the community who consciously seek to build links and create opportunities for inter community engagement. The grant programme needs to continue to support events that break down barriers, create dialogue and lead to Dalston people having fun together and projects that actively support the process of rebuilding an evolving and inclusive community while continuing to celebrate the contributions of the established communities.

#### **Community give back**

Among the issues highlighted through the consultation was "getting residents to give back". This is a key aim of the Community First programme. It should therefore support projects that encourage and facilitate, volunteering, improving the environment and fundraising for local community groups and projects.

#### **Health and wellbeing (with particular emphasis on the disabled)**

There are particular challenges for those people with disabilities or who are living with long-term health problems. Decreased mobility can lead to social isolation and unchecked this can lead to a deterioration in physical and mental health. The grant programme should support projects that seek to promote wellbeing, and that create opportunities for involvement by those who would otherwise be excluded because of disability, failing health or age.

#### **Housing**

While change is inevitable and indeed accelerating in the area, the grant programme should consciously seek to help projects wishing to create a voice for those who feel they are not heard, in this process. In particular those who feel that

they are being excluded because of the lack of affordable housing and projects giving advice to Dalstons homeless and tenants of private landlords

**Youth opportunities (cultural, economic and education)**

It is clear that the limitations placed on the life opportunities of young people in Dalston are a social blight that must be challenged. The grant programme should support projects that empower our young people to develop themselves through engagement with cultural, economic and educational opportunities.



**HACKNEY UNITES**