Vital Signs® 2022

Latest research and community feedback highlighting the key needs in London’s East End
METHODOLOGY

Social Themes

Vital Signs is defined by 10 social themes. To help ensure that data gathered across the UK is comparable, each social theme receives a grade based on the latest data available for specific nationally and locally agreed core indicators. The grade benchmarks how the East End (Hackney, Newham and Tower Hamlets) is performing on average, in relation to national figures, as follows:

A The East End is performing better than 80% of comparable areas.
B The East End is performing better than 60% of comparable areas.
C The East End is performing better than 40% of comparable areas.
D The East End is performing worse than 60% of comparable areas.
E The East End is performing worse than 80% of comparable areas.

Community Consultation

EECF conducted a community survey from July to December 2021 which was available online and by hard copy to everyone that lives, studies or works in the East End. 391 responses were received.

As part of the consultation process, respondents were invited to grade each of the 10 social themes.

Data

The data in Vital Signs is gathered from a variety of publicly available data sources including the Office for National Statistics and the Thriving Places Index. Improvement of Vital Signs is a constant work in progress and, following the removal of previously used core indicators, new indicators were reviewed and identified by our researcher. The information included within Vital Signs is a snapshot and only analyses a limited amount of the available data. All information is considered accurate as of 2021. If you have any queries or believe any information to be incorrect, please contact info@eastendcf.org.

Due to insufficient data sources, statistics for the City of London have purposely been left out, though this area falls within East End Community Foundation’s area of remit.

Special thanks go to Dr Kate Dawson of the London School of Economics and Political Science for her support in researching and analysing the data used to compile this report. We would also like to thank all the organisations and residents who engaged in the consultation.
OUR KEY ‘TAKE-AWAYS’ FROM THIS REPORT

Strong economies and culture but not everyone benefits

The East End continues to perform strongly economically. Tower Hamlets is ranked in the top four in England, driven by Canary Wharf, which is home to the global offices of international investment companies, consulting firms and insurance services. Within this, the arts, heritage and culture sector is equally strong. Hackney scores particularly well, ranked seventh in London. In fact publishing, film and TV production and broadcasting are rapidly developing economies for both Hackney and Newham.

However, when we compare earnings by place of work to those by residence, it reveals contradictions between the local economy’s strength and local people’s employment situation. For instance, those working in Tower Hamlets earn on average 18% more than those living in the borough.

Participation and community cohesion are low across all three boroughs, suggesting that those who live in the East End may not necessarily benefit from the cultural assets in these places.

Educational attainment not translating into employment

The proportion of people in the East End with qualifications at degree level or above continues to rise, significantly outperforming the UK average. Given the record levels of inequality and poverty across all three boroughs, this is an incredible achievement.

However, despite improvements, the East End’s unemployment rates are still amongst the highest 20% of boroughs nationally. Employment rates for Black and ethnic minority residents are lower than white residents by 22%.

In terms of wage growth and inflation, Newham wages do not keep pace with inflation which means Newham households are likely to be particularly affected by the cost of living crisis.

High levels of inequality

Measures of deprivation for Hackney, Newham and Tower Hamlets have all improved since the 2017 Vital Signs report. However, despite this, levels of deprivation are still very high. This is because income is unevenly distributed within boroughs.

Younger people and older people are among the worst affected by these high levels of deprivation and inequality. For instance, in Tower Hamlets 44% of older people live in income deprived households, 41% in Hackney and 37% in Newham. This compares to the national average of 14%. Taking into account housing costs, London has the highest rate of child poverty in the country. Within London, these East End boroughs have the highest proportion of children living in poverty, with 53.4% in Tower Hamlets, 43.2% in Newham and 41.3% in Hackney.

Digital exclusion

This has become an increasingly important area of concern, with clear links to income poverty. It has disproportionately impacted younger people and their ability to access online learning as well as older people, who may face higher levels of social exclusion and difficulties accessing health care and other vital services.
The East End performs well in terms of educational attainment, particularly in Hackney where GCSE scores are higher than the England average. Newham performs well with the second smallest attainment gap in London between pupils eligible for free school meals and those not. However, the most disadvantaged pupils have been severely affected by remote learning and a lack of digital equipment and skills.

FACTS & FIGURES

- The average Attainment 8 score for pupils’ GCSEs in the East End is 48.6, which is higher than the England average of 46.7.
- The attainment gap for disadvantaged pupils is smaller in the East End compared to the 28.2% England average, with 8.2% in Newham, 11.9% in Tower Hamlets and 15.7% in Hackney.
- The levels of 16-17-year-olds not in education, employment or training (NEET) across the East End is 2.5%, lower than the England average of 2.8% but higher than the London average of 1.8%.
- 59.8% of the East End population have a qualification at NVQ 4+ (degree level) compared to the England average of 43.1%.
- 7.3% of East End residents have no qualifications compared to 6.4% of the UK population.

I am a governor of a secondary school in Tower Hamlets. During COVID over one third of the students did not have an appropriate device to access online learning. Unless this is rapidly addressed there will be a cohort severely disadvantaged; they will not be able to access work in a knowledge-based economy. The standard of Maths and English being taught is still below what employers require. There are insufficient opportunities for young people to gain the employment and life skills required in the workplace.

“We need to create opportunity and allow people a way in which they can access them. Lots of services went online through the pandemic, but those that most need them cannot use the interfaces. Along with people losing jobs, we need to make provision for people to develop, train and retrain so that they can sustainably work or seek employment.”
HEALTHY LIVING

The picture of healthy living is quite mixed in the East End. Tower Hamlets has the second highest cardiovascular mortality rate in England. There has been a sharp increase in obesity amongst children, particularly in Newham, which is ranked in the top 5 local authorities. Mental health issues have increased across the UK as well as in the East End.

FACTS & FIGURES

- The rate for female cardiovascular mortality is 84% above the national average.
- Male life expectancy has improved in the East End with Hackney now reaching the England average of 79.8 years, and Tower Hamlets and Newham exceeding this at 80.4 years.
- The East End average adult population has lower obesity rates (58.2%) than the national average (62.8%). However in Newham the rate is significantly higher at 68.2%.
- Childhood obesity rates are significantly higher than the national average, linked to unhealthy eating and low levels of physical activity.
- 2020/2021 research on wellbeing suggests 25.3% of East End respondents reported poor levels of mental health with respect to anxiety, compared to the England average of 24.15%. In Tower Hamlets it was 26.9%.

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

Community feedback: Healthy Living - how’s it going?

1 star = things are going badly — we must act now
2 stars = things aren’t going well — we should act as soon as possible
3 stars = things are OK, but it could be better
4 stars = Things are going well, but we can make them better
5 stars = Everything is great — let’s keep things that way

FAIRNESS

Despite some reductions in deprivation since 2017, the East End is still amongst the most deprived regions nationally. This is because income is unevenly distributed within boroughs. Poverty amongst children and older people is the highest in Britain.

FACTS & FIGURES

- Within London, Tower Hamlets, Newham and Hackney have the highest percentages of children living in poverty, at 53.4%, 43.2% and 41.3%, respectively.
- In Tower Hamlets, 44% of older people live in income deprived households. The figure is 41% for Hackney and 37% for Newham. These are higher than the figure for London at 20% and significantly higher than the national average of 14%.
- In terms of households living in fuel poverty, all boroughs are above the England average of 13.4%, with Hackney on 16.5% and Tower Hamlets on 14.2%. Newham, with 21.7%, has the highest rate of fuel poverty in England.

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

“The pandemic has impacted on employment, and those on low pay or made redundant after furlough bear the brunt. This will be made worse by fuel and food price increases and will push people who were already struggling to make ends meet below the breadline.”

“There is poverty in Hackney and not everyone has access to the same facilities because they can’t afford them.”

“Our young people are facing unemployment. There’s racism in education with a high levels of exclusion and no access to the same opportunities.”

“The pandemic has impacted on employment, and those on low pay or made redundant after furlough bear the brunt. This will be made worse by fuel and food price increases and will push people who were already struggling to make ends meet below the breadline.”

“There is poverty in Hackney and not everyone has access to the same facilities because they can’t afford them.”

“Housing is expensive, children’s clubs don’t have enough funding, and schools are understaffed.”
While the national unemployment rate was steadily falling prior to 2020, unemployment in the East End is higher than the national average. In Newham, wage growth has been slower than the UK average, meaning households are likely to be feeling the most significant squeeze and experiencing in-work poverty.

**FACTS & FIGURES**

- Unemployment rates have dropped significantly since 2013. However, the East End unemployment rate of 6.6% is still higher than the England average of 4.5%.
- The average employment rate in the East End for ethnic minority groups is 62.7% compared to 81.1% amongst the white population.
- 33.8% of employees in Newham are considered to be living in poverty, compared to 20.4% in London.
- In January 2021, Newham had the highest number of people on furlough in London, averaging 21.9% compared to the lowest number in Richmond at 14.4%.

Unemployment amongst younger and older people higher than London and UK

“**My family and friends are ok, they are in secure public services employment. But many local residents are in low paid, long hours insecure jobs. Proximity to the City, where many places shut down totally during the pandemic, disproportionately affected people in Newham and other surrounding boroughs who provide the service staff for the City.**”

“**Majority of jobs in the borough filled by non-residents. Limited skills development and opportunities for people from BAME community, particularly women, who need this support before entering into labour market.**”

The East End performs strongly in terms of arts, culture and heritage. It ranks in the top 10% of boroughs nationally. However, engagement with arts and culture show important borough differences, particularly between Hackney and Newham.

**FACTS & FIGURES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Borough</th>
<th>Attended a museum or gallery</th>
<th>Used a public library service</th>
<th>Attended an event, performance or festival involving creative, artistic, dance, theatrical or musical activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tower Hamlets</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hackney</td>
<td>61.74%</td>
<td>40.92%</td>
<td>56.41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newham</td>
<td>54.33%</td>
<td>35.96%</td>
<td>53.97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East End</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>London</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td>46.50%</td>
<td>38.69%</td>
<td>56.83%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“**The arts in particular are very vulnerable in Newham. Budgets are stretched, the pandemic has hit hard, and buildings and organisations are all at risk. The Council is positive about supporting local work, but may simply have no facility to do so.**”

“**The borough has so much heritage, culture and arts. It is also very diverse and there is a strong feeling of community.**”

“**Everything is under pressure at the moment. People have less money to spend, and not everyone is comfortable going out.**”

°% of claims as a proportion of resident population of the same age, Nov 2021
Our Vital Signs research shows that the youngest and oldest in the East End are most impacted by the deep-seated inequality that exists across Hackney, Tower Hamlets and Newham. The pandemic has exacerbated poverty, unemployment and social isolation amongst these groups.

A quarter of 18-24-year-olds were furloughed or lost their jobs during the pandemic and 1 in 6 are experiencing poor mental health. Tens of thousands of homes are without internet, creating a barrier to accessing online education, employment opportunities and vital public services. In the East End over 50 per cent of older people are living in poverty and even more are suffering from loneliness and isolation.

The East End Community Foundation’s Life Chances Campaign aims to raise £5 million to create lasting change in London’s East End.

Using our 30 years’ experience of raising and distributing funds we are bringing together donors and grassroots organisations to target sustained investment where it is needed most.

The Life Chances Campaign aims to close the digital divide by providing low-income families and older people with a device, 12-months free internet access and digital skills training.

- 49% of people in Newham aged 75 years and over have never used the internet.
- In Tower Hamlets only 57% of people aged 60 plus have access to the internet.
- A survey for Lloyds Consumer Digital Index found 78% of people agree that the pandemic has escalated the need for digital skills; 80% agree that using technology has been a vital support to them.

“Getting access to a GP is getting more difficult as more practices insist on going online to make an appointment. A significant number of residents in the area do not have access to the internet.”

IMPROVING LIFE CHANCES FOR EAST END RESIDENTS

DIGITAL EXCLUSION

The COVID pandemic threw a spotlight on the digital inequality that exists in the East End, with tens of thousands of homes without internet connection and families unable to access online education, vital public services and employment opportunities.

Our Vital Signs research shows clear links between income poverty and digital exclusion, with the costs of an internet connection and limited access to devices among the core concerns for low-income families and individuals. ‘Digital poverty’ has had a devastating impact on learning for children in low-income families, worsening inequalities in education. There is also a strong link between digital exclusion and older age, with over half of all adult internet non-users over the age of 75.
PENSIONER POVERTY AND ISOLATION

While improvements can be seen in comparison to the 2017 Vital Signs report, Tower Hamlets, Hackney and Newham have the highest levels of pensioner poverty in the country.

- In Tower Hamlets 44% of older people live in income deprived households; 41% for Hackney and 37% for Newham. This compares to the national average of 14%.
- National data reports increased levels of loneliness during the Covid-19 pandemic, with Hackney and Tower Hamlets reporting rates of loneliness above the UK average.

YOUNG PEOPLE’S WELLBEING AND EMPLOYMENT

Whilst educational attainment is improving across all boroughs, unemployment is a significant issue facing young people. Vulnerable young people are facing increased mental health issues, a lack of safe spaces and are at higher risk of engaging in gangs, substance misuse and other harmful practices.

- For 10-17-year-olds receiving cautions or sentences, Tower Hamlets is ranked 4th highest with 58.6 per 10,000, Hackney is 8th with 53.7 and Newham is 13th with 47.4.
- Young people want life skills: 43% of young people ranked ‘life skills training including financial education’ in their top three support opportunities that would be most useful to them right now.
- Youth unemployment across the East End is higher than the UK’s average of 5.7%, with 6.7% of 18-24-year-olds in Tower Hamlets unemployed, compared to 8.7% in Hackney and 8.3% in Newham.

Life Chances will help lift older people out of poverty by helping them access benefits, get online and take part in community activities to reduce loneliness and isolation.

The Life Chances Campaign will tackle these issues by investing in experienced local organisations uniquely placed to provide the support young people need.
**ENVIRONMENT**

Overall, the East End ranks poorly when it comes to environmental issues including air quality and waste management. In comparison to 2017, there have been some improvements but we are still ranked in the lowest 20% nationally.

**FACTS & FIGURES**
- In 2019, two million Londoners were living in conditions of illegal air pollution.
- Newham and Hackney have seen an increase in the recycling rate, from 15% to 20% and 25% to 28% respectively.
- Tower Hamlets has seen a reduction in the rate of recycling from 27% to 22%, the lowest rate for the borough in more than a decade.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Improvements in Index of Multiple Deprivation Living Environment scores</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tower Hamlets</td>
<td>33.74%</td>
<td>33.21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hackney</td>
<td>32.47%</td>
<td>32.65%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Newham</td>
<td>26.72%</td>
<td>26.52%</td>
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<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td>39.82%</td>
<td>39.65%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**COMMUNITY FEEDBACK**

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**COMMUNITY FEEDBACK**

- "The environment is generally clean and tidy, but bins are usually full. There should be more green spaces, as there are more and more buildings and grey areas, and nature’s what is needed. I live near the main road."
- "I have been prevented from keeping plants outside my flat and breathing fresh air like this, when people have limited outside space, destroy wellbeing and limit our direct engagement with nature."
- "The green spaces function really well and are a positive asset. Air pollution is a real concern, especially as we live near the A406 and A13."
- "My food waste goes in general rubbish at the moment, very poor practice and very wasteful. No drive to increase renewable energy, pollution levels still high."

**LOCAL ECONOMY**

The local economy represents one of the East End’s top performing aspects. While the local economy is exceptionally strong, this success does not bring equal benefits to all residents.

**FACTS & FIGURES**
- Economic performance in the East End is particularly high as a proportion of the national economy, with Tower Hamlets’ share of 1.76% ranking them fourth in the country, after Westminster, City of London and Camden. However, Tower Hamlets’ share of national GVA reduced from 2014 to 2019 for financial and insurance activities: from 12.11% to 10.54%. The transportation and storage industry also reduced from £1.2 billion to £616 million over the same period.
- Both Hackney and Newham have seen rapid economic growth in publishing, film, TV production and broadcasting sectors, from £221 million in 2014 to £524 million in 2019.
- 2019 figures for labour productivity put Tower Hamlets highest in the country, 72% above the national average.

**COMMUNITY FEEDBACK**

- "More small local businesses are needed. The quality is improving, but more need to up their game. I know of plenty of people who have been spending their money in Central London because the local offering wasn’t good enough. Westfield was a big step forwards."
- "Wealth and proceeds of business based locally is not ‘trickling down.’ How can it be right that the borough has City Fringe and Canary Wharf and 50% pensioners in poverty and 57% of households with children in poverty. That should shame us all."
- "The local economy outside the immediate vicinity of big business is on its knees because big business does not spend, does not engage and does not have any regard for the local community and its economy."
- "The sustainability and resilience of local businesses is very much community driven, as there is a high Asian community, but a lot of the large and major businesses do not benefit the local community."
While there have been increased rates of wellbeing recorded over the last decade in the East End, COVID-19 has challenged people’s ability to feel part of their communities. Reports of social isolation and loneliness have increased, particularly for the youngest and oldest residents.

### FACTS & FIGURES

- The UK reports increasing levels of loneliness between April and May 2020: 5% of people said they felt lonely ‘often’ or ‘always.’ This figure increased to 7.2% between October 2020 and February 2021.
- Newham’s population felt less lonely, with a lower average of 4.5%. In Hackney, the figure was higher at 8.1% and in Tower Hamlets, it was 9.3%.
- There are important borough differences, with Hackney’s well-being score significantly below the London and England average and behind the other East End boroughs. The most recent data shows a fall in wellbeing scores, most significantly in Tower Hamlets.

“Pre-pandemic, I felt connected to a few groups I was involved with, but the situation in the last year has broken the connections down. I feel that activities to create closer bonds with my local streets would make things safer and cleaner.”

“Isolation is a big issue, not just within the elderly community but also the younger community. Maybe we need more intergenerational projects to help build up this sense of community that is missing, while also alleviating some isolation.”

### Community Feedback: Safety – how’s it going?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Star Rating</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 stars</td>
<td>6%</td>
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<td>4 stars</td>
<td>36%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 stars</td>
<td>18%</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 star</td>
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Community feedback: Safety – how’s it going?

- “The prevalence of gangs in Hackney is a problem for young men in particular and many parents are deeply stressed and worried about their sons’ safety on the streets and the likelihood that they will be drawn into gang life without really wanting to, but just feeling that they have to because of where they live and the pressure from their peers.”
- “I do not leave my flat or allow my children out after dark. We have been affected by crime and antisocial behaviour and do not feel safe in the community. We rarely see police in our area.”

### FACTS & FIGURES

- According to 2020 data, rates of violent crime in the East End remain high, increasing across all three boroughs, to an average of 26.87 per 1000 people, higher than London.
- The East End as a whole is in the upper 50% for under 18s cautioned and sentenced. For 10-17-year-olds receiving cautions or sentences, Tower Hamlets is ranked 4th highest with 58.6 per 10,000, Hackney is 8th with 53.7 and Newham is 13th with 47.4.
- There is a continued rise in the number of recorded racist hate crimes across the East End, from an average of 660 crimes in 2017 to an average of 972 crimes in 2021. This marks a 50% increase across the East End, 18% higher than London’s average increase.

Violent crime continues to rise throughout the country. In the East End violent crime has risen higher than the London average. There has been a 50% increase in racist hate crimes across the East End, 18% higher than the London average. We have also seen increased levels of theft, residential burglary and vehicle offences which can be linked to rising poverty and inequality.
Looking at affordability, rent levels and homelessness, high rent costs are absorbing a significant proportion of wages. Housing and homelessness topped the priority issues from our community survey. COVID-19 presents emerging challenges to housing security and homelessness.

**FACTS & FIGURES**

- Housing affordability is calculated by dividing average house price by average earnings. Hackney is the ninth least affordable borough in England. Newham is ranked at 54 and Tower Hamlets at 105. Whilst this is an improvement, the long-term trend shows housing is increasingly unaffordable.
- Hackney and Tower Hamlets have the lowest numbers of dwellings that are owner-occupied in England, at just 28.7% and 29.8% respectively. This is significant because overcrowding is more likely in social or private rented dwellings.
- Rent for a one bedroom home works out at 51% of your salary if you live in Hackney, 51% in Tower Hamlets and 50% in Newham. This is higher than the London average of 45.1% and double the UK average of 24%.
- Rough sleeping is rising across the East End. In Newham 724 people were seen sleeping rough in 2019/20, the second highest number in London.

**COMMUNITY FEEDBACK**

- "Housing is a crisis. Thousands of families are living in overcrowded conditions, leading to depression and mental health issues. Young families have children growing up in one or two bedroom houses and have no room to sit and study. We can see so many houses are being built. However a high percentage is for the rich. Only a tiny amount is for social housing, even then the rent is incredibly high. Homelessness is thriving. In every corner of every borough you will notice rough sleepers."

- "Our local park — Central Park in East Ham — is a great resource and a space in which we meet people and exercise. The borough has lots of diversity and culture."
- "I love living in a vibrant neighbourhood — a strong local economy means there is lots to do and a positive, forward-facing feel to the area."
- "I love living in a vibrant neighbourhood — a strong local economy means there is lots to do and a positive, forward-facing feel to the area."
- "Put it this way, you have to make that difference and make changes. If you’re friendly, act friendly. My block of 6, we are multicultural and we all get along and help each other. We don’t look at colour or race, we see a need. We are 1st human."

**WHAT PEOPLE LOVE MOST**

We asked people what they love most about where they live. Their top three are:
- Community vibrancy and togetherness
- Community heritage and culture
- The outside environment and green spaces
WAYS TO GET INVOLVED

PHILANTHROPISTS AND BUSINESSES
EECF brings you closer to the East End and our communities. Our knowledge and experience can connect you to the real value of your investment locally. There are a number of ways you can get involved.

Individual
1. Choose to distribute funding for immediate impact
2. Establish a long-term legacy through an endowment

Business
Pool your giving with other donors for greater impact through the Life Chances Campaign
Create a bespoke philanthropic giving programme through a donor advised fund
Direct your giving to support a particular organisation, borough or social issue through a donor directed fund

Statutory organisation
Charitable trust

Speak to the Development Team on 020 7345 4444 to find out more.

VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR
EECF delivers a number of different grants programmes and community support activities to improve opportunities for local people including:

- grants to fund projects tackling local issues such as employability, education and community cohesion
- volunteer brokerage scheme matching corporate volunteers with local projects
- annual Christmas appeal and activities to support isolated and vulnerable elderly residents

Speak to the Grants & Community Engagement Team on 020 7345 4444 to find out more.
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