



high

trees

Impact Report

September 2021 - August 2022

Letter from Co-CEOs

2021 – 2022 was another momentous year for High Trees – the highlight of the year being the newly refurbished High Trees Hub, where the majority of our adult services are delivered from. Long overdue, the building can now run more services than ever before, with state of the art classrooms, purpose built pods for delivering our Employment services and a community internet café providing free digital access to local residents and can more easily host our growing staff team. We're so proud that the environment we deliver our services in now reflects the standards that our users have always deserved and this community asset has now had its future secured.

The year also saw the need for our services continue to grow and we are now delivering these to more beneficiaries than in our 25 year history. Not only has the reach of our services increased, but the increasingly difficult climate our communities are facing means we now, more than ever, ensuring our services are easy to access for those who need them most and that they are given the support they need to reach their goals while they are with us.

High Trees have also spent the year refining our offer as an infrastructure support organisation, ensuring that our growth and learning allows us to help others on their journey. Partnership working is foundational to our approach, and we know that we can only successfully achieve the systematic change we need if we do so in collaboration with a thriving VCS sector. This year was an exciting one for the partnerships we lead and are members of, and we are doing more than ever to ensure our learning and best practice is shared with the sector.



As always, we are most proud of the people who have accessed our services throughout the year and our part in helping them reach their goals – with more than ever before gaining new skills, qualifications, employment and (as our users overwhelmingly tell us) increased well-being and confidence.

This report aims to give an overview of our work throughout the year, the type of services we provide and the change we want them to achieve. It's also a chance to hear directly from our service users, which we think paints the clearest picture of who High Trees are.

Anna and Grace
High Trees Co-CEOs



Introduction to High Trees

High Trees is a community organisation and charity based in Tulse Hill, Lambeth. We were founded by local residents in 1998 and have been delivering projects and services to local people for 25 years.

Lambeth is a borough with high levels of poverty and inequality. Nearly 40% of children in Lambeth live in povertyⁱ and 70% of the residents live in the 40% most deprived areas nationallyⁱⁱ. The high levels of ethnic inequality in Lambeth identified several years ago in the Runnymede Reviewⁱⁱⁱ continue to be evident across education^{iv}, employment^v, health^{vi} and housing^{vii}. In this context, many local people feel disenfranchised, with only 28% of people in the borough feeling able to influence decisions affecting their local area^{viii}.

Our work is underpinned by an understanding that the individuals and communities in our local area face multiple long-standing structural disadvantages and inequalities which impact on their lives.

Our services are aimed at addressing these through building the skills, voice and capacity of individuals and communities.

High Trees
founded in
1998

meeting everyone
as a person of
**great
potential**

How we achieve change

community education and training

We specialise in delivering adult education in community settings to provide individuals with the skills they need for work and life. Our accredited and non-accredited courses include ESOL, English & Maths Functional Skills, Community Organising, ICT, Vocational courses and employment preparation.

employment and careers support

We provide person-centered employment support in the form of one-to-one coaching, pre-employment training and advice sessions delivered across a variety of community settings. Our services are open to all but have a particular focus on supporting young adults aged 18-30, those aged 50+ and individuals with long-term health conditions to improve their economic position through sustainable employment opportunities and career progression.

children young people and family services

We work on the basis of early intervention and deliver a range of services from Tulse Hill Adventure Playground for 8-16 year olds focused on play, study and social action. We also deliver coaching in local secondary schools and a young leaders programme for young people aged 16-19 providing paid work experience and employment support. All our work aims to improve the aspirations and well-being of children and young people.

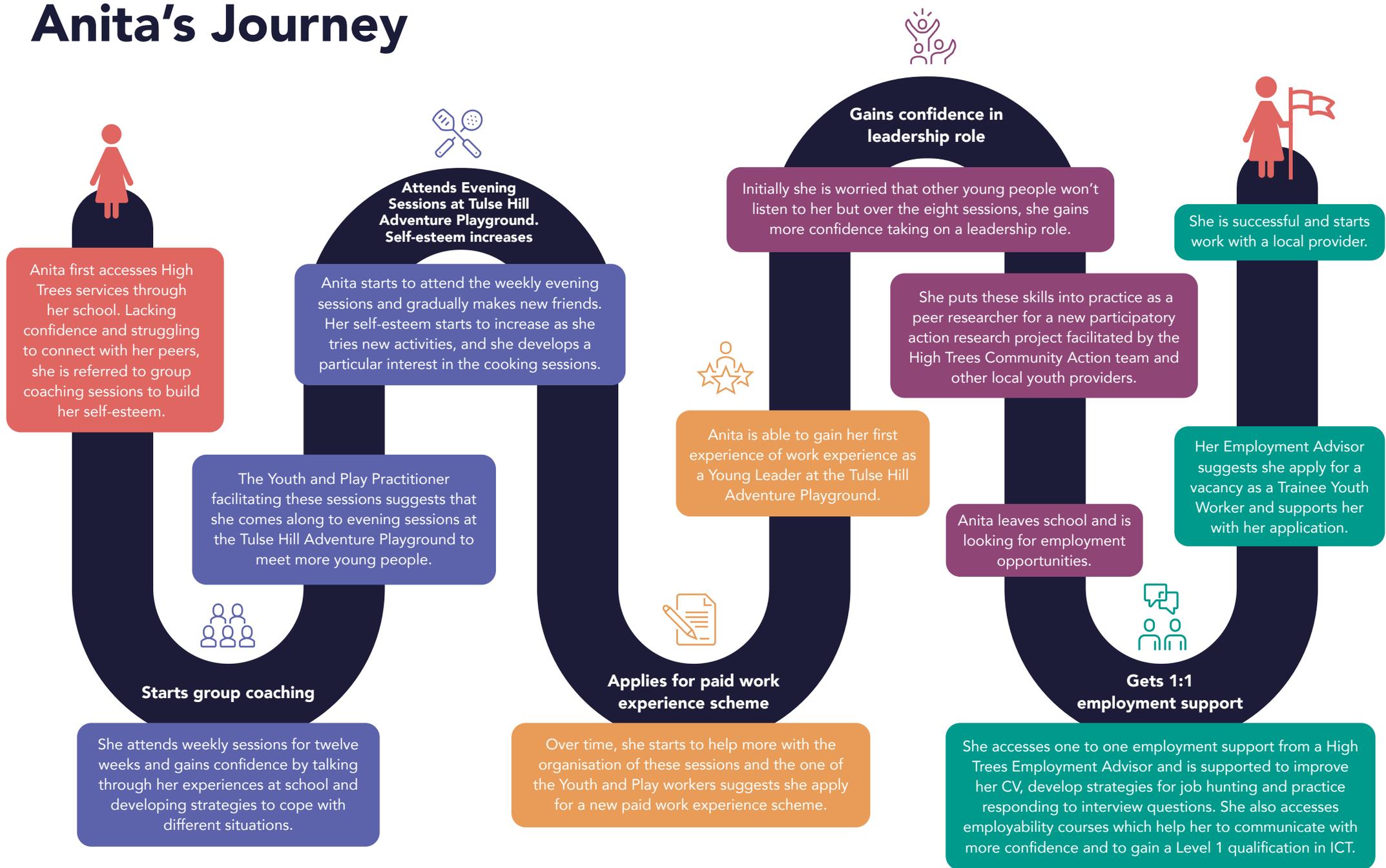
partnerships

We lead and support the development of some of Lambeth's most impactful voluntary and community sector partnerships, creating joined up strategies to respond to the challenges faced by the communities we support. Our current partnerships focus on tackling violence affecting young people, improving community spaces, and supporting individuals facing multiple disadvantages.

community action

We support individuals and community groups to develop advocacy skills and empower them to take collective community action on issues that affect them, whilst also improving representation in decision making. We do this through listening campaigns, supporting local groups, 1:1 support, community organising training and peer research.

Anita's Journey



High Trees Impact

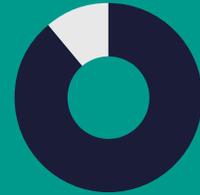
This year we worked directly with **1700** young people and adults.

High Trees worked intensively with **1150 people** through our Employment and Careers, Education and Training and Children, Young People and Family activities. We supported an additional **54 community leaders** with mentoring and capacity building sessions. We reached a further **218 individuals** through our Community Action work through listening campaigns and outreach activities and **278 further young people** through our work with the Lambeth Peer Action Collective.

Thousands more individuals were supported through the work of our Building Young Brixton and Place for All Partnerships.



Our work is targeted and local:



80%

of our participants live in Lambeth



52%

participants lived in central Brixton wards (Brixton Acre Lane, Brixton North, Brixton Rush Common, Brixton Windrush, Herne Hill & Loughborough Junction & St Martins)



We aim to reach those most disadvantaged by structural inequality:



81%

of adults accessing our employment and education services were in receipt of benefits.



72%

of adults were unemployed at the start of engagement with us.



79%

were from a Minority Ethnic Background.

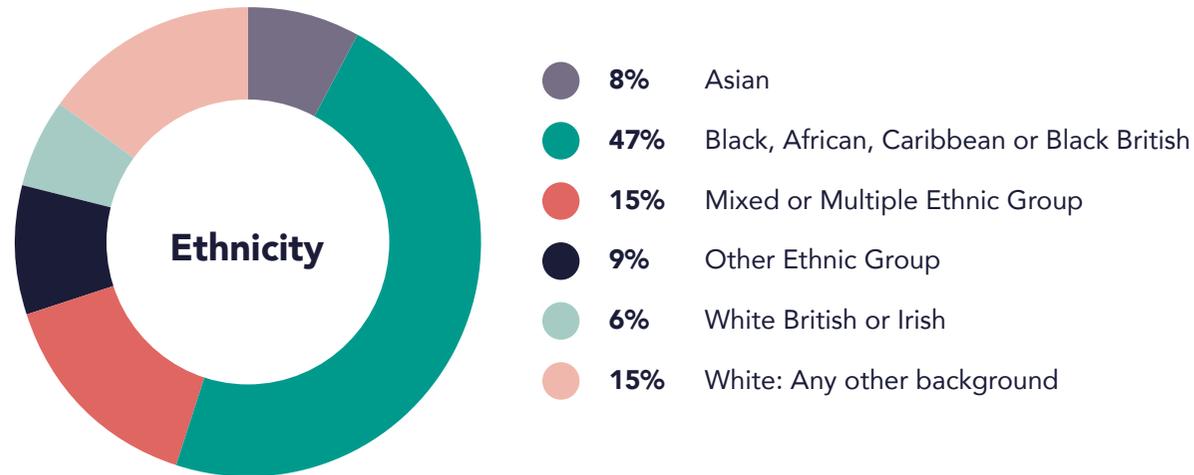


60%

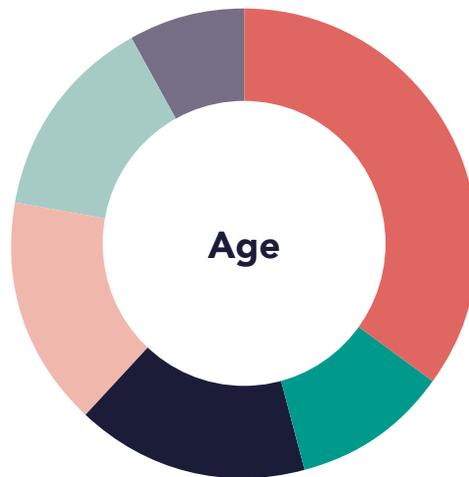
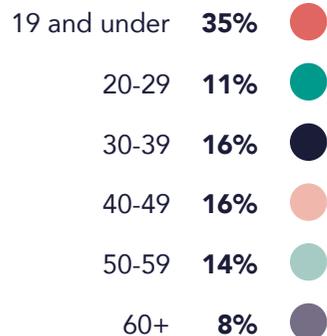
were female (women and girls).

High Trees Service User Demographics

Of those we worked with directly:



Sex:



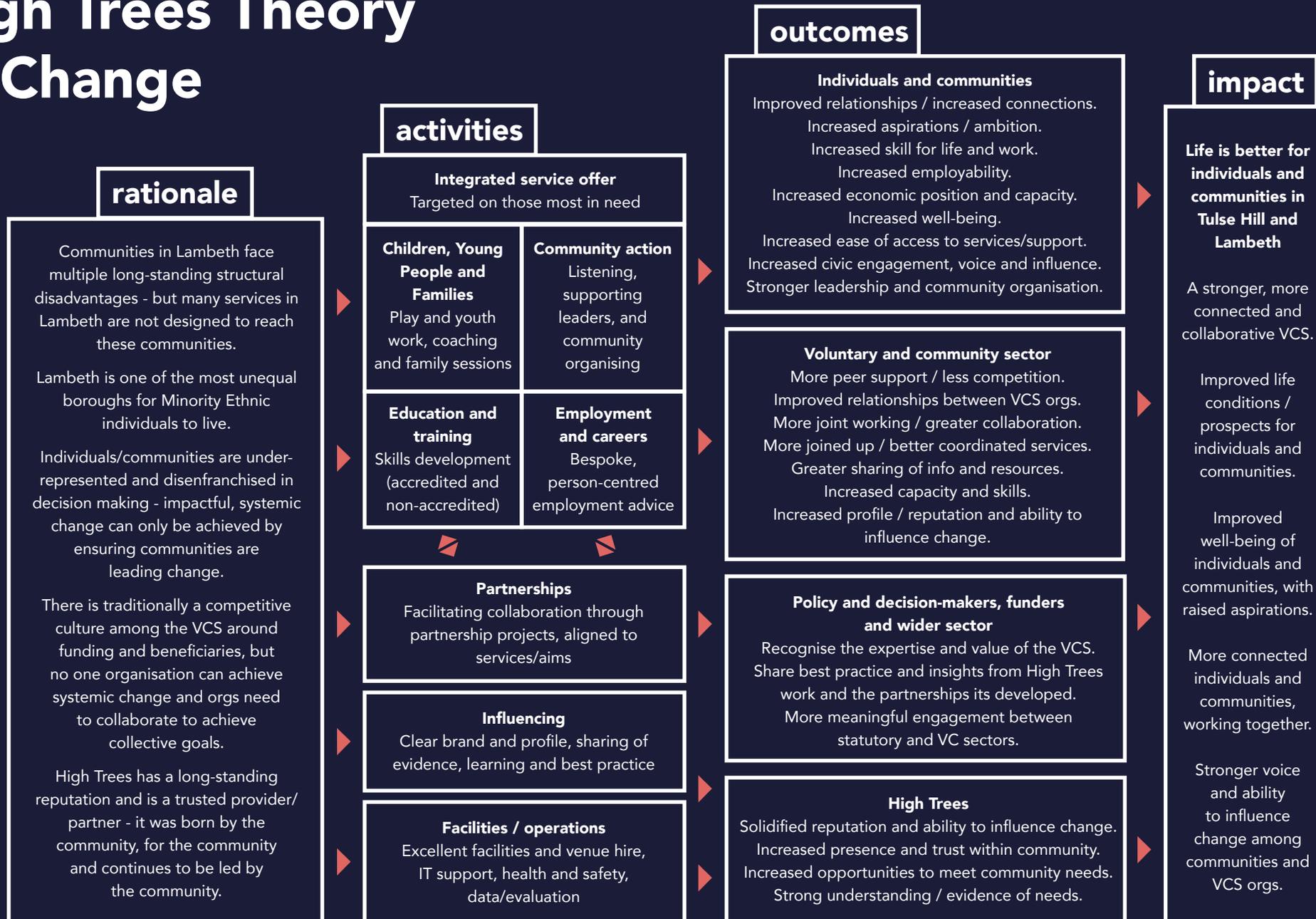
Ethnicity

This year, 79% of our users came from a Minority Ethnic Background. 47% of users came from a Black, African, Caribbean, or other Black British Background and 15% came from a mixed or multiple ethnic group background. 8% of our users were Asian, 6% were White British, 15% were from other White backgrounds and 9% were from 'Other Ethnic Group'.

Age breakdown

We worked with individuals from the age of 7 months to 78 years old. 35% of our users were under 19, primarily accessing our Children's, Young People and Family Services or taking part in research undertaken by the Lambeth Peer Action Collective. 11% of our adult service users were aged 20-29, 16% were aged 30-39 and a further 16% were aged 40-49. 22% of our users were over 50.

High Trees Theory of Change



A snapshot of our impact

Improved life conditions/prospects for individuals and communities	559 adults developed their skills by accessing at least one of 77 courses (many did more than one)	115 individuals gained a new qualification studying with us.	60 individuals , who accessed intensive one to one careers support, moved into employment.	17 young people gained paid work experience through our 'Young Leaders' scheme.
Increased well-being of individuals and communities with raised aspirations	100% of learners said accessing a course had helped them to increase their well-being and confidence.	73% of young people said they felt more positive after accessing our adventure play sessions.	81% of young people reported feeling more confident after accessing our coaching sessions.	
More connected individuals and communities working together	98% of learners made new friends whilst accessing our adult learning provision.	98% of learners felt more motivated to get involved in their local community after studying with us.	54 community leaders from The Fields & Tulse Hill Estates accessed mentoring support.	6 community leaders were able to take up new leadership opportunities on The Fields Tenants and Residents Association.
A stronger, more connected, and collaborative VCS	1983 young people were supported through the Building Young Brixton Partnership this year.	Our successful Place For All Partnership comes to an end, having supported over 4800 people over a period of 4 years.	We launch our Lambeth Hubs Resource Bank with resources to support voluntary and community sector organisations managing community buildings across Lambeth. 60 organisations downloaded these resources in the first three months.	
Communities and VCS organisations have a stronger voice and ability to influence change.	418 young people took part in research into violence affecting young people through the Lambeth Peer Action Collective. Both research and social action was led by a team of 12 young peer researchers from Lambeth and led to the creation of a collective manifesto to create a safer Lambeth for young people.	218 adults took part in listening and engagement activities facilitated by the Community Action team.	Residents from St Martins Estate received water rate refunds following a successful community led campaign , supported by High Trees.	40 local residents contributed to a listening campaign on Tulse Hill Estate. So far this has identified common concerns around damp and mould, plumbing and drainage, safety and crime, provision of service for young people and housing repair.



Our new community building!

Renovations on the St Martin's Learning Centre were completed in August 2022.

This has been a long time coming for High Trees, after 22 years based in the old library with no major repairs or updates, the building had fallen into a state of disrepair.

The refurbishment has transformed our centre and the way our community services run allowing us to support more local residents than ever before. The new building has updated training rooms, two specialist employment support pods and an internet café open for community use.

The improvements also mean we can offer better facilities for local organisations and residents who need space for their activities. More local groups are using our space than ever before.

As High Trees continues to grow, the refurbishment has also created more space to house our expanded staff team.

All stakeholders of D&R Tutoring Services are pleased with the learning environment High Trees has created. The refurbishment has truly added value to our institution. Children, teachers and parents have echoed their joy about the environment. This has further enabled our motto 'Maximising your potential'.

- Local Tutoring Service

The new learning centre is an excellent, well-equipped and modern centre with the facilities that make learning and teaching a great experience. The smartboard with its tools has made a huge difference for me and I use it all the time in every class.

- High Trees Tutor

The New Learning Centre is brilliant, it's tidy, organised, and clean, it feels really nice to come in to learn. I think it makes it attractive for learners and it's easier to learn with the big screen.

- ICT Learner

Increasing education and skills

High Trees run a diverse learning programme, designed to meet the needs of local residents aged 19 and above. All our courses aim to equip individuals with the skills they need for life and work and to achieve their personal goals. Our offer of accredited and non-accredited courses ranges from basic skills that can help with employment or build skills for everyday life, to specialised accredited courses that can provide routes into new careers (such as administration, information advice and guidance, or education).

This year our courses have included English, ICT and Maths Functional Skills, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), vocational courses directly supporting employment skills and courses focusing on improving well-being such as yoga.

Our provision is delivered across all High Trees venues, and in multiple other venues in Lambeth, including children's centres, libraries, community centres and primary schools. We recognise that some learners have previously had little or negative experiences of education and training, so we aim to offer all our courses in a supportive environment and to provide our users with the best guidance about opportunities for volunteering, accessing further or higher education and training.

Addressing digital inclusion

121 individuals accessed our ICT classes this year. We offer a selection of accredited and non-accredited courses that support individuals with little or no experience using computers to develop their skills and confidence using a range of ICT applications. Classes also enable learners to develop essential life skills such as browsing the internet securely and using email.

I work as a receptionist in a hotel, it went through a development, and I needed digital skills to fulfill my role. Before coming to High Trees, I had zero knowledge about these things. Now I can do a lot of things both on my phone and computer: creating things, notes and tables, making online payments... I didn't know anything at all, but now I feel confident with IT which helps me in my role.



This year **559** people accessed our community learning provision – which this year comprised **77 courses.**

30% of learners did more than one course.



34%

of learners had no qualifications when they registered with us.



99%

of learners said that the course had helped them get closer to their long-term goal.



115 individuals gained 173 qualifications

in English, Maths, ICT, and other vocational subjects at Entry 1 to Level 3.

Isabel's Story*

Isabel accessed our Education and Training services for the first time in September 2021. Originally from Portugal, she spoke very little English and felt unable to communicate confidently. This was restricting her job opportunities and meant she was unable to secure stable employment.

Her aim with High Trees was to develop her English to the point she would be able to train as a dental nurse. She started with us as an ESOL learner and quickly progressed, moving on to our accredited courses in English, Maths and ICT. Overall, Isabel has gained seven accreditations with High Trees (English Functional Skills Entry 1, 2 & 3, Maths Functional Skills Entry 2, 3 & L1, ICT Entry 3). She is currently studying English Functional Skills at Level 1. These qualifications have all brought her closer to her overall aspiration of training as a dental nurse, for which she needs GCSE level qualifications in English language and maths (equivalent to Level 2 Functional Skills) and strong communication skills.

Isabel's confidence has grown considerably during her time with us, and she has been a great advocate of the importance of adult learning with other learners and users, speaking at learner events and representing other High Trees learners in meetings with our funders.

*All names changed.



[My] experience with High Trees has been very positive, and I could make many progresses against my goals. I want to do a dental nurse course and I am gaining the skills needed to make the next steps. The course (ESOL and English Functional Skills) has improved my confidence in lots of ways. The English Functional Skills course is helping in my daily life and now I believe I can do everything in UK, even become a Dental Nurse! I have my friends too and I advised them to study too as it is so important. I am learning so much. I am learning more and hearing about what people are saying, it's making me a more mature person. I am better person, and I am learning more.

- Isabel

The ESOL Community at High Trees

Our ESOL community continues to grow, and this year 260 people learnt English with us. In addition to a core offer of weekly language classes, High Trees run an 'ESOL Social' enrichment programme of learning trips, speakers, and social activities. This focuses on the personal development of ESOL students and provides the opportunity for the curriculum to extend beyond the classroom. It aims to support learners to develop their resilience, confidence, independence and to support them in their day to day lives in the U.K.

One social activity that our learners particularly value is our weekly conversation club. This aims to create an informal atmosphere for learners to practice their English and build relationships with peers. We have seen the number of individuals accessing conversation club grow steadily over the last couple of years and this year 109 learners attended in total.



“

The conversation club was a huge help for me. I could meet nice people and could practice English speaking. I became more confident in speaking. Before attending the club, I was scared of someone talking to me. I think this is the past now. The topics are interesting and useful. The teachers are very kind and helpful “ – ESOL Learner

Over 50 learners enjoyed trips to trips to Brixton Library, Brixton Windmill, Horniman Museum, The British Museum and Tower Bridge that aimed to support ESOL learners to access cultural and educational sites for the first time. For 85% of those attending, this was their first opportunity to visit these locations. We also welcomed speakers from the UK Parliament, the Horniman Museum and Guide Dogs for The Blind.

“

‘I live here but I never see anywhere because I don’t know how to go “ - Learner attending trip to Tower Bridge

“

I wanted to bring my child here before, but the online booking was too complicated. I wanted us to be able to enjoy together “ - Learner attending family trip to Horniman Museum

Our learners tell us that learning English is an important way for them to improve their well-being and build confidence. Our ESOL Social Programme has created a new sense of community amongst our ESOL Learners and has enabled them to put their English into practice in their day to day lives.

“

‘I feel part of a community, a family “ - ESOL Learner

“

‘Learning English at High Trees makes me feel excited, happy and more confident “ - ESOL Learner



This year **237 individuals** accessed **employment support**.



28% of our beneficiaries were over 50.



26% were aged 18 - 30.



80% were from a Minority Ethnic Background.



26% reported having a long-term health condition.



96 individuals received **in-depth 1:1 support** with our advisors, of which **60 moved into employment**.



115 individuals accessed less intensive support (such as advice in community settings or one-off employment coaching sessions) and were able to **improve skills such as CV writing, job searching and interview preparation**.



26 individuals undertook **Pre-employability Training** with us this year.

Supporting people into employment

Our Employment & Careers Service offers person centred support for local residents wishing to enter employment. Our support is open to all unemployed residents in Lambeth but particularly aims to support those experiencing more significant barriers to employment, such as long-term economic inactivity, long term health conditions, those aged 50+, young people ages 16-30, and ex-offenders. Support is delivered through advice sessions in community settings, intensive one to one employment coaching and through pre-employment training courses (courses designed with employers with guaranteed interviews at the end).

The individuals we work with often face multiple challenges on their journey to employment. We support individuals to develop skills for employment (for example CV writing, interview preparation, support with job searches) and match individuals to local employment opportunities sourced through our engagement with local employers. Our employment support is offered alongside our integrated service offer, part of which includes a variety of adult education courses in key skills such as Maths, English and ICT.

“It gave me a foundation in terms of having a mindset and being prepared into going into work”.

“[High Trees] supported me to leave my flat, go out and do things including going on an IT course to improve my skills”.

“It provided me with lots of opportunities and raised my confidence with looking for work”.

“The support caused me to be more aware of my strengths, skills and raised my confidence. I also received guidance to help me in my decision making”.

Pre-Employability Training

This year we introduced a new service – Pre-Employability Training. Delivered in partnership with local employers, beneficiaries attend a short training course which focuses on preparation for a specific job and employer (for example a bus driver position at a bus company). Upon successful completion of the course, the beneficiary is guaranteed an interview with the employer for that position.

26 individuals undertook Pre-Employability Training with us this year, of which 11 were successful in gaining employment.

Karen's Story*

Karen lost her delivery job when the Pandemic hit. Financial difficulties and the lockdown led to anxiety, which increased over time and resulted in a serious impact on her well-being. Once lockdown ended, she started applying for 10-15 jobs daily, however the rejections increased her anxiety so much that it badly affected her performance at interviews. Karen was put forward by Jobcentre Plus to one of our bus driver Pre-Employability Training courses. First her self-doubt and anxiety seemed to be an obstacle to her engaging in the course, but with the help of our Employment Advisor, she agreed to take the course. She was encouraged by the supportive atmosphere of the group and found it helpful to be able to receive such specialised training in a small group. She told us that her confidence was growing daily and that she felt comfortable despite being the only woman on the course. After the training, High Trees arranged an interview for Karen with Abellio and her application was successful. She started her new role in June 2022.



“High Trees created a really friendly training environment, and the work High Trees do comes from heart. It’s obvious High Trees care which makes a difference. I feel like now I’ve got my life back which I could not have done without High Trees and my Work Coach who referred me to them”.

- Karen



*name changed



Supporting children, young people and families

Our Children, Young People and Families services are run by a small team based at Tulse Hill Adventure Playground. We provide open access adventure play, coaching in local schools, a family stay and play service, forest school sessions, after school and holiday services and youth leadership programmes. We are also open during school holidays for daytime open access play sessions.

Working on the basis of early intervention, we seek to support the young people we work with to become more independent, to have stronger relationships with their peers and trusted adults and to improve their self-esteem and emotional resilience.

This year:



246 young people

took part in **adventure play activities** (of which 129 were new to High Trees).



54 young people

took part in **coaching**.



18 under 5's

attended 'ESOL Learn & Play' with their parents.



17 young leaders

took part in **paid work experience** as part of our **young leaders' scheme**.



Creating opportunities for adventure play

Adventure play provides children and young people opportunities to manage their own risk, develop their curiosity, try new experiences, build relationships and to improve their confidence with the support of trusted youth and play workers in an environment that is created for them.

This year **246 children and young people** visited the Tulse Hill Adventure Playground.



92%

said they could explore what they liked.



100%

said they tried something new.

Young people tell us that this is having a **tangible impact on their well-being:**



78%

felt more confident.



70%

felt more independent.



86% of young people reported that coming to the Adventure Playground helped them make new friends. This is consistently one of the reasons young people tell us the Adventure Playground is important to them:



'It's fun and I get to meet lots of people'

'Adventure feels like home and family'

'I meet new friends and I can explore new things when I go on trips'

'I make new friends and I love playing with the adults'



73% of young people also said they felt more positive after coming to the Adventure Playground. In their own words, many young people mention the importance of **having spaces to express themselves, feel confident** and **to escape / feel calm**:



'It helps me calm myself down and learn new things. Somewhere I can escape and have fun'

'It makes me feel confident'

'The Adventure Playground is important to me because ever since I've been coming here I've felt safer here and the staff are super kind and respectful!!'

'I feel like I can express myself'

'It helps me calm down'



Coaching

Through our **YOUth Coach programme**, we work with young people for a period of **6-12 weeks to build their self-esteem and emotional resilience**. By supporting young people to develop strategies to manage their emotions, we aim to improve their relationships with peers and overall school engagement.

This year 54 young people took part in group coaching as part of our work with local schools.

Young people tell us that they want to have fun, build confidence and to find ways to manage their emotions through coaching:

“I want to have fun here, but I also want to grow at the same time”

“I want to have good confidence and be able to feel happy in school”

“I want to get more confidence and be able to express my thoughts”

“To help manage my emotions for certain situations”

Following coaching, young people are asked to complete a survey to reflect on the extent to which it has helped them. This year:



95%
said they had learnt new things.



84%
said coaching had helped them make new friends.



92%
felt more independent.



81%
felt more confident.



92%
felt more positive.

“The thing I like most about coaching is that it made me more confident and the games were also fun”

“It’s a good place to talk”

“It’s fun and it teaches you life skills”

“Building my confidence”

“I can talk about things”

“The youth coaches are always there to listen”

“Being able to talk to someone”

Developing young leaders

Our Young Leaders programme offers young people aged 16-19 paid work experience as a Youth Worker at our Adventure Playground and employment support. We introduced this programme this year to create an opportunity for young people living in Lambeth to gain leadership skills in a friendly environment and to develop their skills for work and life.

This year, 17 young people took part in our young leaders' scheme. For many young people accessing this programme was their first experience of professional employment.

One young person described how she was motivated to take part **'to make my CV shine and to build connections'**. Reflecting on their experience, another young leader said **'I learned I should have more confidence in myself. It taught me work life, what's it like. I think I would have more confidence applying for jobs'**.

One young person became a sessional staff member on completion of the programme until they were accepted for a university place.

ESOL Learn and Play

We launched ESOL Learn and Play this year, a new activity specifically targeted at parents of children under 5 who speak English as a second language. Weekly sessions focus on language learning and play aim to create a new opportunity for parents with limited English to learn alongside their child, build their confidence speaking the language and to form new peer relationships. So far 18 under 5s have attended these sessions alongside their parents.

90% of parents attending these sessions reported making new friends and 100% reported feeling more positive as a result of attending the sessions.



"I am feeling more positive because now I have a little family here."

"I live on my own, in one room with my daughter and my much older son. I worry that she doesn't make friends and that she doesn't know how to play with other children. When she comes to learn and play she has the chance to play with other children and to start to learn English."

"My son does new things. He didn't use to say colours and now he can. I like coming here, it makes me happy. I am learning English. My son has fun here. I really like it here. My son doesn't want to go home!"

"I like that you can meet new people. My child really likes to come for play."



Talk It Out : EDUCATION



Increasing voice and influence

Our Community Action team works to support residents from Tulse Hill and neighbouring areas to build more active, represented and civically engaged communities. We do this through the approach of community organising which starts with listening to understand the issues people face. Through listening we identify leaders and support them to come together with their neighbours to organise, to build their collective power and ultimately secure change on issues important to them. We achieve this by providing one to one and group mentoring, practical support and accredited training in community organising. We also deliver a range of bespoke community action projects across Lambeth in response to needs that emerge from listening to the community and stakeholders. This year the team have also led an ambitious Participatory Action Research Programme supported by a partnership of seven youth organisations based in Lambeth (The Lambeth Peer Action Collective).

This year:



218 adults

took part in **listening and engagement activities** facilitated by the Community Action team.



54 community leaders

from the Fields Estate & Tulse Hill Estate received **mentoring support**.



17 people

took part in **Community Action Training**.

Stories of Change

The Fields Estate

“Realizing that you can actually do this, and you can actually get people to sit and listen and even people that are quite high up have been personally quite a thing”

– Community Leader

Last year we started talking to residents on the Fields Estate and identifying local priorities for action. **This work involved approaching 125 households and speaking to 65 residents to gather their views and opinions.** This year, a group of 8 community leaders have continued to meet regularly to respond to the issues raised through this listening campaign.

Simon* is one of the community members who has been supported by the Community Action team and describes how his perception has changed as a result of working with us:

“To be honest. It’s not something that I had actually thought about. You know, I was just a member of the community getting on with my life, having issues... I thought OK, that could be done differently that could be improved, that could be done better, but I’ve never thought about influencing decisions, that was never something that had occurred to me.”

Community leaders recognised the importance of being a part of an organised and constituted Tenants and Residents Association (TRA) for their concerns to be heard by their housing associations. This year new leaders from the Fields have been

supported to engage with the existing TRA. This work culminated in an Annual General Meeting in July 2022 where six of the community leaders we have been working with were elected as committee members.

Simon reflects on how the groups have been able to increase their voice and influence throughout this process:

“It definitely started with the door knocking, you know, because that all of a sudden made us think all right, there are these issues. How do we all come together to speak about these issues? How do we hold housing associations accountable? As we came to the meetings then we began to understand about we can actually interact with your landlords, through coming together and forming a united voice and without that door knocking we wouldn’t have gone to this stage.”

The Community Action Team will continue to work with residents on the Fields to ensure that they have support for as long as they need to secure the change they would like to see.





Water Rates

Last year we reported on our work to support local residents who were being overcharged for their water bills to campaign for refunds. Local agencies had not been responsive despite residents raising this issue repeatedly. High Trees supported residents to form a new group, 'Justice for Housing Association Tenants' to co-ordinate and focus their campaigning activities. We are happy to report that these campaigns have been successful, and a refunds started in January 2022.

One community leader, Tom* described how 'being part of the community' was the aspect he enjoyed the most about being part of the campaign and how he had gained confidence in their ability to support others in the community, **"I've got confidence in the fact that, there's people who need assistance, and if I can assist I will."**

Commenting on the role that High Trees played, Tom highlighted how community leaders were supported to develop the skills and knowledge they needed to take on a leadership role during the campaign:

"I haven't got all the skills in the world and there's a place like High Trees, that you go to and get assistance to follow through ... I don't think anybody, on the ground floor has got the full knowledge of the different groups and organisations that can help you through and therefore you do need a community hub like High Trees too who can push it further afield if need be."

*names changed

Tulse Hill Estate

This year we started a new listening campaign on Tulse Hill Estate with an aim to **understand the experiences of living on the estate and to identify any communal challenges on which residents would like to take action.** Over the summer, an initial **70 households were approached** and **40 people contributed their views.** Themes that have emerged so far are problems with damp and mould, plumbing and drainage, safety and crime, provision of service for young people and housing repair. We will be continuing to speak to residents on the estate over the coming year to identify priorities for action and to identify community leaders to take this work forward.



Partnerships

Partnerships are central to High Trees' work. We believe we have a role to play in creating a collaborative and connected Lambeth, and that partnership working is one of the key things that will allow the VCS sector to thrive.

We recognise that organisations need to work together to create joined-up responses to the challenges faced by the communities we support and that by working in partnership we can offer more comprehensive and tailored support.

High Trees currently lead and support five Voluntary and Community Sector partnerships:

- Building Young Brixton
- Lambeth Peer Action Collective
- Lambeth Community Hubs Network
- Place For All
- Young Tulse Hill



Building Young Brixton

Led by High Trees and set up in 2016, **Building Young Brixton is a consortium of eight Lambeth-based youth service providers focused on creating opportunities for young people to thrive.** The consortium enables young people to access personal and skills development, education and career support, play, sports and therapeutic interventions.

This year Building Young Brixton **supported 1983 young people** to improve their well-being, build positive relationships and increase civic participation through integrated youth service delivery.



1505 young people accessed **group activities.**



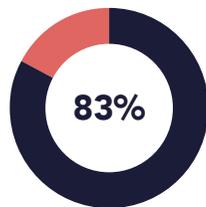
657 young people accessed **group or 1:1 mentoring.**



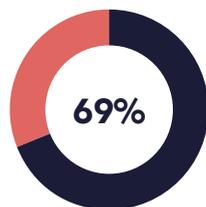
268 young people accessed **career or personal development** workshops.



158 young people received **1:1 employment and career advice.**



83% of the young people we worked with reported **improved mental health and well-being** from engaging with the services of the partnership.



69% reported **improved relationships** with peers.



Creating more opportunities for young people

Through working in partnership, we have been able to develop numerous collaborative working practices which enable us to better meet young people's needs. Through cross-partner visits and taster days, young people have been able to **access activities such as horse riding, cooking competitions and adventure play provision for the first time.** Referrals of individual young people have also increased access to schemes such as **free and subsidised driving lessons.** Engagement with external organisations, such as the Young Vic Theatre, has given young people **new experiences of the arts and performance.**

Sharing learning and improving practice

BYB remains committed to developing youth work practice and this year youth workers across the partnership have **come together 13 times to share best practice, learn from each other and plan successful collaborations.** In addition to these meetings the BYB central team have begun hosting **monthly support meetings for our peer mentors** to share challenges they are experiencing and receive advice and guidance. This year Spiral Skills has also provided **mentoring training to 36 youth workers** within the partnership.

Partners:



EBONY HORSE CLUB
CHANGING LIVES IN THE HEART OF BRIXTON





Lambeth Peer Action Collective



This year High Trees have led an ambitious Participatory Action Research Programme supported by a partnership of seven youth organisations based in Lambeth - Juvenis, Spiral Skills, IRMO, MLCE and St Matthew's Project, Grove Adventure Playground and The Baytree Centre. Together these organisations make up the Lambeth Peer Action Collective (LPAC).

Since August 2021, LPAC has been working alongside a group of 12 peer researchers to research the perspectives of young people living in Lambeth and how the environment they live in shapes their experiences of violence.



418 young people took part in research through the Lambeth Peer Action Collective.



106 young people took part in one-to-one interviews.



231 young people took part in schools' workshops.



47 young people took part in Talk it Out sessions to reflect on the findings and develop ideas for action.

The stories captured through this project paint a vivid picture of the **experiences of young people in Lambeth and their perspectives on the causes and consequences of the violence that affects them.** Our research findings **expose the distressing impact that violence has on young people, as well as their friends, family and wider community.** For many of the young people we spoke to, violence is seen as a normal, routine and inevitable part of their lives. Often exposed to violence daily, we saw young people carry the mental and emotional burden of trying to keep safe and avoid potential harm. Life-altering, tragic events left them vulnerable and hopeless.

Key findings from the research:

1. For many young people, violence is seen as an inevitable, routine and normal part of their lives.
2. Many young people feel they don't have control over their lives and futures.
3. Poor housing conditions make young people feel unsafe.
4. Many young people feel that they cannot rely on public services and are cut off from important opportunities.
5. Safe, affordable and youth-friendly neighbourhoods are important places for young people to find connection, opportunities & belonging.
6. There is a mental and emotional burden young people carry to keep safe and avoid potential harm.

From the outset, the **LPAC Partnership has aimed to create opportunities for young people to respond to the findings from the peer research and to identify solutions and ways to build a safer environment for young people in Lambeth.** Using the insights from the research, the peer research team have begun to develop ideas to identify solutions and build campaigns to demand better

opportunities, housing and an education system that works for all young people. The work to develop these campaigns has **involved over 200 young people** to date and **the creation of a manifesto for change.** More information about the work of LPAC, including the Manifesto can be found at www.lambethpac.com and our final research report can be [downloaded here](#).

Partners:





Lambeth Community Hubs Network



Lambeth Community Hubs Network is a partnership of 5 community anchor charities in Lambeth that provide place-based provision in our local areas. We collaborate to **strengthen our reach and practice, working towards our shared vision of achieving a more equal, inclusive and thriving Lambeth.**

As a partnership we want to **make our learning and resources accessible to the wider voluntary and community sector** and this year we **launched our new resource library** with templates, checklists and guides for organisations running community buildings. In the first three months, **more than 500 people visited our new site** - <https://lambethhubs.com/> and our resources were downloaded 141 times by 60 different organisations.

Partners:



Place For All

PLACE
FOR ALL

This year our successful 'Place for All' partnership came to an end. Place For All was a 4 year long project between High Trees, Baytree Centre and Indo-American Refugee Organisation (IRMO). The aim of the partnership was to **provide integrated services across education, advice, and employment to socially and economically excluded individuals**. The partnership particularly aimed to support minority ethnic communities, low-income households, lone parents, individuals over 50 and Latin American individuals.

The collaboration was supported by the National Lottery Community Fund and **resulted in over 4800 people accessing our services over 4 years**.

An external evaluation of the partnership found that the quality services delivered through the partnership had resulted in **positive outcomes for local people** and that **new avenues of peer support had been fostered through collaborative working**.

As part of this collaboration, High Trees delivered **84 Basic Skills courses** in **English, Maths** and **ICT** to **653 individuals** and provided over **500 individuals with employment support**.



Young Tulse Hill

young
tulse hill

Led by High Trees, Young Tulse Hill is a locality-based partnership aimed at **improving the coordination, integration and joint working of local youth & play providers in Tulse Hill Ward**. Partnership members include St Matthew Project, LEAP, High Trees and working with local Tenants and Residents Association. Through the partnership **280 young people were supported through the network of youth services offered**.

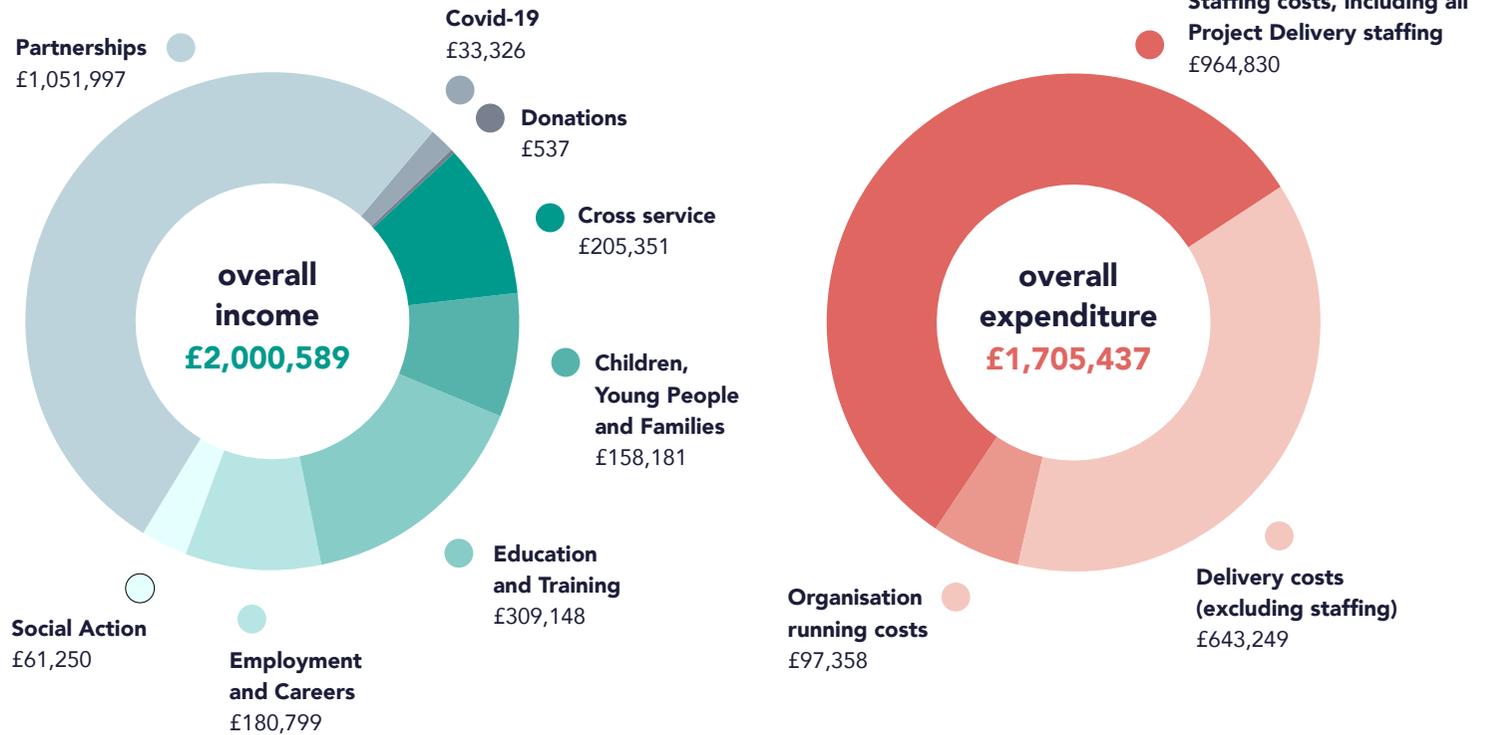
Partners:



Impact Report Finance

High Trees are very grateful to our funders which this year included: Impact on Urban Health, Tudor Trust, Lambeth Council, Children in Need, City Bridge Trust, The Berkeley Foundation, Henry Smith, John Lewis, Postcode Lottery, The Walcot Foundation, Trust for London, Barclays, National Lottery - Covid Response, Greater London Authority, Esmee Fairburn, National Lottery Communities Fund and the Youth Endowment Foundation, Coop and I Will Fund, the L&Q Foundation, Power to Change, Veolia, Clothworkers Foundation, The Badur Foundation, Metropolitan Housing and Sport England.

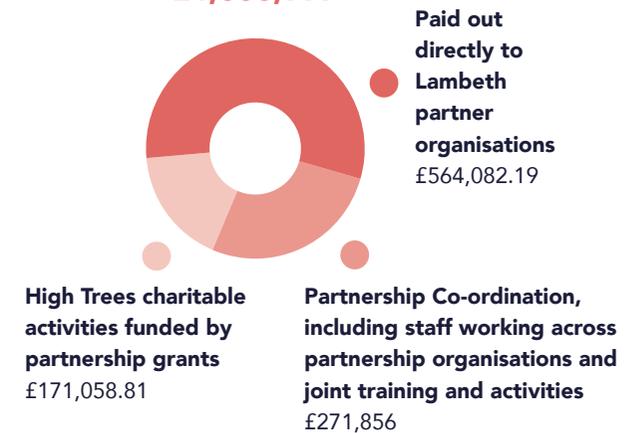
Please see our [full accounts here](#) for full detail



Partnerships Income Breakdown £1,051,997



Partnerships Expenditure Breakdown £1,006,997



Future plans

1. Secure the future of the Tulse Hill Adventure Playground:

Our Children, Young People and Families Team deliver our services from Tulse Hill Adventure Playground and although the service is thriving, the facilities are well below the standards our community deserves. Without a long term secure lease for the site, we enter the 5th year of no large outdoor play structures and the building itself is in disrepair – and makes very poor use of the footprint available. Negotiations with Lambeth Council have yet to move forward, and until this is resolved High Trees are unable to raise the funding or do the work needed to make the site fit for purpose.

2. Infrastructure Support:

High Trees now have considerable experience in leading and developing partnerships and capacity building smaller organisations in the borough. Having been on an immense journey of change and growth ourselves over the past 5-7 years and also playing a lead role in several successful partnerships, High Trees has been refining our offer to the VCS sector, ensuring our own learning and best practice can be shared. Direct delivery of our services will always be the core of our work, but we believe it is this foundation that allows us to deliver meaningful infrastructure support to other organisations. This year will see the launch of a range of free toolkits and resources for the sector, initially focused on collaboration and partnership working and employment support, alongside a range of tools and templates for those running community buildings and a capacity building and mentoring offer delivered via some of our key partnerships.

3. Community Research:

The diverse communities with which we work are impacted by entrenched structural inequalities, and our work aims to mitigate some of the impacts of this. There is a welcome appetite to understand the lives of the individuals we work with and to understand barriers to better meet need, however, we increasingly

see communities' and individuals 'over researched' and asked to give their time and energy to endless rounds of research and consultations with no meaningful identifiable outcomes. High Trees are working to establish a network of locally rooted organisations with an interest and expertise in community-based research that exists to ensure that research taking place in Lambeth is ethical, of high quality and has the needs and interests of communities at its core. This network will develop meaningful models & approaches for research in Lambeth (such as peer-research and participatory action research) to ensure that community members directly benefit from research undertaken.

4. Further embed pastoral support across our services:

No matter what other work High Trees undertake – and we believe the only way to achieve the systems change our beneficiaries need is to contribute in ways beyond our direct services – the services we provide our beneficiaries across Community Education and Training, Employment and Careers, Children Young People and Families and Community Action will always be the most important work we do. The needs, and the complexity of the needs, many of our users have has grown considerably since the pandemic and increasingly challenging economic conditions as has the proportion of our service users facing extreme challenges. Although always a key component of our service design and delivery, this year will see a focus on ensuring we are doing all we can to ensure that those who need our services are supported to access them and supported to reach their goals while they are with us.



With special thanks to:



References

- i. [Trust for London's Poverty Profile 2021](#)
- ii. [Health Profile for Lambeth 2022](#)
- iii. [Ethnic Inequalities in London. Runnymede Trust. 2016](#)
- iv. According to the 2021 Census the rate of people who have Level 4 qualification is 29% among Black and Black British, and 59% among the White population in Lambeth. [Census 2021](#), own calculation.
- v. Only 64% of all Black or Black British are employed in Lambeth, compared to 86% of the White population [Annual Population Survey 2022](#).
- vi. The proportion of people living with two or more long-term conditions is substantially higher among Black communities (29%) than in Asian (19%) and White (17%) communities." [Impact on Urban Health 2020](#)
- vii. According to the 2021 Census, 29% of the Black or Black British population lives in social rented accommodation, whilst only 9% of the White population lives in social rented accommodation. [Census 2021](#), own calculation.
- viii. [State of the Borough Survey 2022](#)

high

trees