



# 50 Steps Let's Challenge Poverty

Issue 7 / October 2021

London Challenge Poverty Week ran from 11-17th October. The aim of Challenge Poverty Week was to increase visibility of the reality of poverty in London, highlight what is happening to help people in poverty and call for the changes we need to end it.

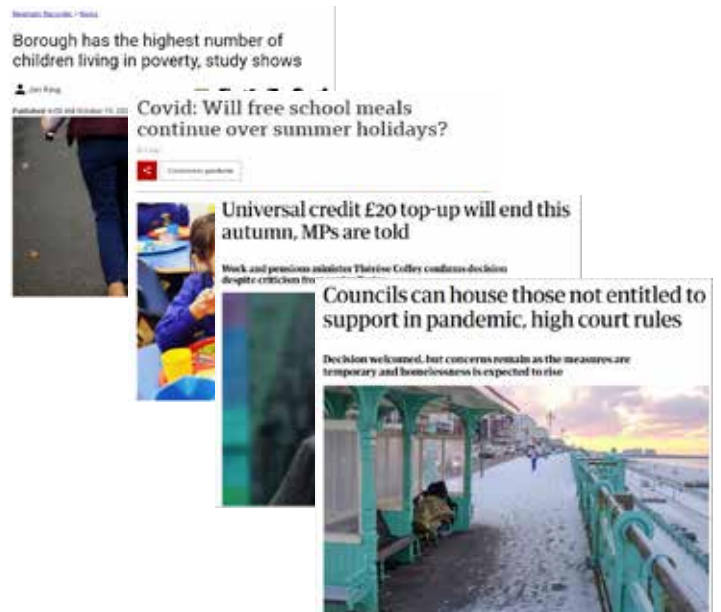
The pandemic has significantly escalated issues around poverty, and we wanted to explore how increased collaboration could improve our ability to respond by involving a variety of people in the borough working to tackle poverty.

The Anti-Poverty Alliance was established in August 2021 and is a joint council and VCS approach to support strategic focus on issues likely to have the greatest impact on poverty status. Issues identified: Skills and employment, money and debt, housing and homelessness and wraparound support advice.

A cross sector Alliance will enable us to:

- Raise awareness about the key issues of poverty in the borough
- Strengthen and better use the levers we have to tackle poverty
- Better use each other's skills and resources to tackle issues
- Identify gaps we need to investigate further and take action
- Standardise our aims – all working towards the same thing

We held an event on the 13th October during Challenge Poverty Week to introduce the Anti-Poverty Alliance, discuss our top priorities for action and engage with new partners to get involved in tackling these areas. To find out more or to get involved contact [helena.taylor@newham.gov.uk](mailto:helena.taylor@newham.gov.uk) or [anne@compostlondon.org.uk](mailto:anne@compostlondon.org.uk).



## Help us challenge poverty in Newham

If you'd like to find out more about how you can help us tackle poverty in the borough email [helena.taylor@newham.gov.uk](mailto:helena.taylor@newham.gov.uk) or [anne@compostlondon.org.uk](mailto:anne@compostlondon.org.uk).

# Changemakers of the month

There are many individuals and organisations that are helping others in the community. We call them Changemakers. Newham Changemakers sit at the heart of our campaign and without them, we wouldn't be able to have such an impact.

## Step 43:



### **Burhan Uddin, Service Manager, Our Newham Money**

Burhan is the Service Manager at Our Newham Money, a service that exclusively offers support to Newham residents who may be struggling with debt or the everyday cost of living. They help residents with the payment of utility bills, whether that's providing energy vouchers for emergency support or offering advice on how residents can reduce bills, renew tariffs and get reconnected.

Click [here](#) to read more about Burhan and Step 43.



## Step 45:



### **Lorraine Tabone, Lola's Homeless**

Lola's Homeless is a community group supporting the homeless in Newham. After her own experiences of being homeless and an encounter with a young homeless girl called Chloe, Lorraine decided to set up the group. They offer a wide range of support to those sleeping rough, including food, clothing, advice, paying for accommodation and attending hospital appointments.

Click [here](#) to read more about Lorraine and Step 45.



## Step 48:



### **Florence Acen, Team Leader Newham, Citizens Advice East End**

Florence helps run advice services for Newham residents at Citizens Advice East End. Citizens Advice are a local independent charity and are members of the national Citizens Advice network. They provide advice and casework on debt, welfare benefits, employment rights, housing, basic immigration, consumer, family and personal issues. Last year, they helped 37,000 people increase their incomes by £22 million through support such as, savings on their gas bills, reversing incorrect benefit decisions, budgeting, writing off and rescheduling debts.

Click [here](#) to read more about Florence and Step 48.



## Step 49:



### **Mathew Sheehan, Managing Director, Enabled Living Healthcare**

Enabled Living Healthcare provide a range of services that help Newham residents live the life they choose. They offer community equipment, sensory support and wheelchair and specialist seating services to support people to continue to live independently in their own homes. They are proud to be a Newham Council owned company and have been an accredited London Living Wage employer since 2018.

Click [here](#) to read more about Mathew and Step 49.



# What we've been up to

## Combating homelessness

Housing and homelessness is one of the four themes identified by the Anti-Poverty Alliance to address, in order to prevent financial hardship. For Londoners who rent privately, on average 40% of their income goes on rent<sup>1</sup>. However, for those reliant on Housing Benefit and impacted by the Government's 'Benefit Cap' the picture is even more stark. Many families with two children privately renting in or around the Newham area, living in a home at the Local Housing Allowance rate<sup>2</sup>, will only be left with £85.60pw to spend on food, clothes, heating, etc. For larger families, this will be even less, because the 'Benefit Cap' doesn't adjust according to family size.

The private rented sector provides a home for almost 60,000 households, many of whom will be struggling to pay the rent. In the last 3 months before the pandemic, 42% of all homelessness cases in the borough were due to an Assured Shorthold Tenancy being terminated. With Newham having the highest number of people on furlough anywhere in the country, the prospect for preventing homelessness needs addressing.

### We can make a difference

Getting in early is key to helping people remain where they are. Providing help financially, or assistance for people to be exempt from the Benefit Cap is critical. As is building stronger relationships with private landlords and helping to stop a spiral of temporary accommodation. For those who moved into 2-bedroom social housing in the past year, the average wait was 7½ years, with waiting times even longer for larger properties. But even that only tells part of the story. Newham has over 33,000 households in need on the council waiting list, which means that the housing crisis is more severe in this borough than almost anywhere else in the UK.

### Greater security and a fairer rental market

In this Parliament, the Government has promised a White Paper to remove 'no fault evictions'<sup>3</sup> by private landlords, as well as proposing a Renter's Reform Bill. This will offer tenants far greater security in their homes and create a fairer rental market. Yet to date, details of what this would include, and when, have not been provided. We need to be part of that conversation, as one single cohesive and coherent voice.

1 English Housing Survey 2018-19, [assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/898397/2018-19\\_EHS\\_Housing\\_costs\\_and\\_affordability.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/898397/2018-19_EHS_Housing_costs_and_affordability.pdf)

2 The Local Housing Allowance (LHA) is the maximum level that Housing Benefit will be paid up to, [www.gov.uk/guidance/local-housing-allowance](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/local-housing-allowance)

3 House of Commons Library: The end of 'no fault' section 21 evictions, [commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-8658/](https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-8658/)

4 Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, London Borough of Newham, [www.newham.gov.uk/council/homelessness-rough-sleeping-strategy](https://www.newham.gov.uk/council/homelessness-rough-sleeping-strategy)

## Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy

We have recently published a draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy<sup>4</sup>, which will be published early next year. It sets out proposals for the next five years as to how we will meet the challenge of accessing quality housing in which residents can make a long-term home; acknowledging a home is not only a source of shelter, but a safe and secure place to live, bring up a family, relax, work, and develop roots within a community. The following five Government actions to tackle homelessness in Newham are within it:

- Protecting tenants who have lost income during the pandemic
- Increased funding to help clear tenants' debts
- Review of the benefit cap
- Support everyone who is homeless
- Rights for renters with real back-up

### Progress in the pandemic

Much progress was made during the pandemic to combat homelessness. We commissioned the first sustainable pathway to support rough sleepers to independence. As a result over 650 rough sleepers were supported during the pandemic:

- 96% of rough sleepers are now registered with a GP
- 206 rough sleepers were supported with their immigration status; 94 achieving pre settled or settled status
- 84 rough sleepers engaged with the Rough Sleeping Substance Misuse Pathway
- Over 60% have received their COVID-19 vaccine
- 34 rough sleepers have been supported through "Beam", a specialist employment agency
- 15 are now in employment.

### Let's act together

We will only be able to achieve this change by acting together. The council, local voluntary services and other organisations can help in providing support and assistance. But a fundamental systematic transformation is needed and will only ever be achieved by acting together. The Anti-Poverty Alliance is Newham's answer to affecting this change. Contact [helena.taylor@newham.gov.uk](mailto:helena.taylor@newham.gov.uk) to find out more.



# What we've been up to

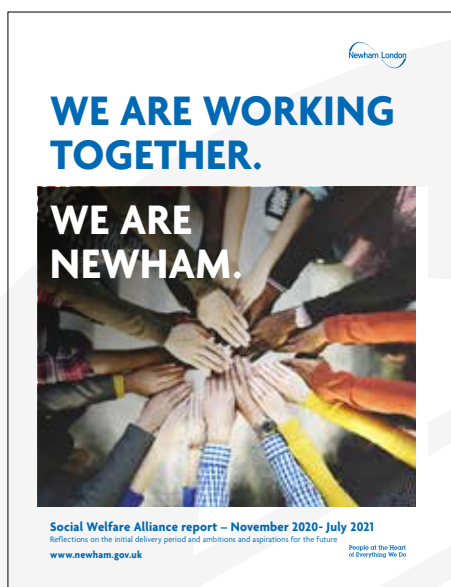
## Social welfare training for frontline workers continues to be a success

Since November 2020 we have been offering a training development pathway, for those in the borough who are regularly having conversations with residents who are presenting with a range of social welfare issues. There have been over 1400 attendances by frontline workers from all sectors with a variety of job roles including - social prescribers, advisors on money and debt, family support workers, and volunteers. The Social Welfare Alliance report - November 2020- July 21 can be viewed [here](#).

A new 2021/22 training framework has been produced based on demand and the current challenges our residents are facing, there are a variety of sessions within different themes including Mental Health, Immigration, Employment, Housing, Safeguarding and Domestic Violence. The sessions are delivered by expert tutors working within these areas, advising what you as a frontline worker can do to immediately support, and where you can refer to for more specialist advice.

The purpose of the training programme is to enhance the skills you already have and facilitate you getting in touch with others having similar conversations across the borough. The training is all delivered online and free to attend, after attending a session we will recommend other sessions to support your learning, provide resources and useful contact information for you to refer back to.

To view the programme and book on to sessions please click [here](#).



## Helping residents secure financial wellbeing

Our Newham Money helps residents facing financial hardship to meet their financial obligations fairly and efficiently by looking at their complete situation to determine the most appropriate course of action.

The service focuses on securing better financial wellbeing for our residents and forms part of Towards a Better Newham COVID-19 Recovery Strategy, pillar 3, using a holistic approach to put our residents at the heart of everything we do.

Financial wellbeing is about feeling secure and in control. It is knowing you can pay the bills today, can deal with the unexpected, and are on track for a healthy financial future.

During the last year Our Newham Money has supported 4,663 residents towards their financial wellbeing, this is 2,634 more residents compared to the same period last year, an increase of 112% more residents with the majority seeking help due to financial hardship because of COVID-19.

The service has provided over 30k advice sessions with Debt Advice & Benefits (41%) and Money Management (Personal Budgeting)– delivered via online virtual support and telephone consultations.

Our Newham Money has supported over 1300 families requesting immediate financial assistance with food, energy, and other COVID-19 related emergencies. Issuing £324k, a 690% increase in grants to support those households facing financial difficulties – that's supporting 2,240 Adults and 1,772 Children.

The service has maximised resident's income by securing just over £1.3 million through Debt Advice, Benefits Entitlements and Money Management.

Our Newham Money is a free and confidential service open Monday to Friday 9am-5pm.

Please do share our contact details with employees or among your communities so we can help others that need this support:

Tel: 020 8430 2041

Email: [ournewhammoney@newham.gov.uk](mailto:ournewhammoney@newham.gov.uk)

Website: [www.ournewhammoney.co.uk](http://www.ournewhammoney.co.uk)

# What we've been up to

## New Employment Rights Hub fights for workers' rights

Newham's Employment Rights Hub has been set up to advise residents of their rights at work.

As the first local authority to embark on such an initiative, the hub is therefore the first of its kind in the UK. The hub has been developed in consultation with the Trades Union Congress (TUC).

Underpayment of the minimum wage, wage theft, discrimination, unfair dismissal, and bogus self-employment appear to be the most widespread and damaging forms of employment rights abuses in Newham. At least 1,800, and as many as 36,000 residents, were underpaid the minimum wage in 2018. There were also around 3,900 'bogus' self-employed workers (i.e. employers assert that their workers are self-employed when in fact they should be classed as employees) in Newham who were denied the rights they should be entitled to. Race discrimination and maternity discrimination are also significant issues for Newham residents.

Workers' rights are at the heart of our policy agenda, which is driven by a commitment to community wealth building and to measuring economic success on the health, happiness, and wellbeing of residents.

The Employment Rights Hub, which is run by the Our Newham Money team, is a free and confidential service which is open Monday to Friday 9am-5pm.

Tel: 020 3373 6494

Email: [employmentrights@newham.gov.uk](mailto:employmentrights@newham.gov.uk)

## The Mayor's Hardship Fund to support those hardest hit by COVID-19

The Mayor has allocated £330,000 to a new hardship fund which will help residents hardest hit by the pandemic to help them survive the daily challenges brought about because of the pandemic.

Our Newham Money will work collaboratively with Newham Food Alliance to distribute the Mayors Hardship Fund to residents. The team allocates payments by looking at the impact of COVID-19 on each claimant and any family they have and assessing their claim based on the information which we gather.

The Mayors Hardship Fund includes grants for reconditioned education ready devices so that children and young people can do their homework and flourish in their education, childcare grants to ease the pressure on families most in need so that parents and carers

can continue to work and grants to help those who will struggle when the universal credit uplift comes to an end. The fund will also boost Newham's local Welfare assistance so that Newham residents in need of emergency support can be supported. Support packages will include food, energy, furniture and white goods.

All applicants will need to be referred to Our Newham Money by Newham Food Alliance and its partners.

Get in touch with Our Newham Money to find out more.

Tel: 020 8430 2041

Email: [ournewhammoney@newham.gov.uk](mailto:ournewhammoney@newham.gov.uk)

## Helping residents stay warm this Winter

Our Newham Money is supporting residents to ensure households get the help they need to reduce utility bills, tackle energy debt, and ultimately stay well and warm. Our Newham advisers liaise at length with suppliers, support residents where metering issues need investigating, set up affordable instalment plans, and even ensure owed income is credited to clients where suppliers are in error.

Get in touch with Our Newham Money to find out more.

Tel: 020 8430 2041

Email: [ournewhammoney@newham.gov.uk](mailto:ournewhammoney@newham.gov.uk)



# What we've been up to

## Maximising the London Living Wage reach in Newham

The **London Living Wage** (LLW) is an hourly rate of pay and is currently set at £10.85. It is calculated independently to reflect the high cost of living in the Capital, giving a worker in London and their family enough to afford the essentials and to save.

At Enabled Living over 50% of their staff are Newham residents and this matters to them. By paying the LLW, they are making sure their own employees are not subjected to unnecessary pressures from low pay, which can affect their wellbeing, and inadvertently cause damage to their health and the health of their families.

**“By paying the LLW we are also recognising and valuing our staff, who in return are offering a great service to our customers.**

**As a changemaker Enabled Living have been supporting the Living Wage movement and encouraging others to join and become LLW employers because there is a strong link between health inequalities and poverty.”**

**Mathew Sheehan**  
Managing Director at Enabled Living

In Newham, many residents still suffer from low pay and poverty. Paying the LLW means people have more opportunities to thrive at work, in their homes and in their community. The movement continues to grow - In Newham we currently have 46 local organisations who are LLW employers.

In November 2020, there were 31 accredited employers. This increase demonstrates that good progress has been made, especially during these financially challenging times. With more organisations paying the LLW it means more people can recover and re-build from the impact of COVID-19. This year, there have been a further 15 organisations that became accredited including Newham Council.

Out of the total number of accredited organisations, 1 in 5 are charity organisations. Enabled Living work very closely with The Magpie Project who support homeless mums with under 5-year-olds. This is what Jane Williams, CEO would like to share, **“As soon as we got a significant number of people on our payroll we went for the accreditation. I am confused when I come**

**across a business that does not commit to paying the Living Wage. The whole ethos of a charity is to make the world a better place and paying everyone enough to live on seems to be a basic building block of a better society. We are so proud to stand alongside Enabled Living and others in Newham as one of London's Living Wage employers.”**

This year it is the 20th anniversary of the movement and Enabled Living have been:

- Part of the first research study by Middlesex University on the Living Wage in Adult Social Care, which was commissioned by the London Living Wage Foundation. The purpose of this study is to understand the challenges and benefits of Living Wage implementation by adult social care providers.
- Delivering workshops to the local charity, voluntary and independent sector on ‘Why is it important to be a London Living Wage (LLW) employer?’ on behalf of the Newham Social Welfare Alliance Programme. The workshops raise awareness that small business and charities can become accredited and may already be paying the LLW.
- Continuing with promotional activities in the build-up to LLW week in November, which is also the 20th anniversary of the movement. Our Enabled Living partners and staff have been involved in producing case studies as part of this movement.
- Inviting partners to ‘Get Digital’ with them and be involved in promotional activities during LLW week. Follow them on **Twitter** to find out more.
- Working closely with Citizens UK and the Living Wage Foundation over the last few months on some exciting plans and we will report back to you in the coming months.

**“We are proud to have been an accredited employer for the last three years. We will continue championing and supporting local businesses, charities, and anchor organisations to join.”**

**Mathew Sheehan**  
Managing Director at Enabled Living

If you would like to find out more about the LLW accreditation process and what it is like for a small business to join email

**[mathew.sheehan@enabledlivinghealthcare.co.uk](mailto:mathew.sheehan@enabledlivinghealthcare.co.uk)**

If you would like to know more about the London Living Wage Foundation email

**[tazkia.khan@livingwage.org.uk](mailto:tazkia.khan@livingwage.org.uk)**

## Get involved

Read more about the 12 priorities and steps on our website **[www.50steps.co.uk](http://www.50steps.co.uk)** or contact **[hifsah.malik@newham.gov.uk](mailto:hifsah.malik@newham.gov.uk)** for more information.

We want to make sure that we fill our newsletter with things you want to hear about. Please let us know if there is anything you'd like us to include more of, or less of, just email **[hifsah.malik@newham.gov.uk](mailto:hifsah.malik@newham.gov.uk)**

Follow our hashtag **#whatsyourstep**

**[www.50steps.co.uk](http://www.50steps.co.uk)**