2021/22 Annual Report

Changing Lives



Ealing mencap

Message from our Chair and Chief Executive

Welcome to our Annual Report for the financial year 2021/22. We hope you enjoy reading about what we have been doing to enhance the lives of people with additional needs, disabilities and their families.

It has been another busy and challenging year but we have pushed through, determined to achieve our vision. It's clear from the stories included in this report that our charitable work is successfully assisting people to access their rights and opportunities, so they can live as happily and independently as possible.

But there is still so much more to be done.

Market research we commissioned evidenced the enormity and complexity of challenges that people with additional needs/disabilities, and their families, continue to endure in their every day lives.

We have always listened to those we are here to serve and are grateful to everyone who shared their experiences. As a result of what they told us, we have launched a new two year Strategic Plan focusing our attention on addressing some of the most critical issues.

To deliver our strategic ambitions and help even more people we have committed £160,000 of our charitable reserves to fund the creation of new support services to meet people's needs.

Parents of children with additional needs/disabilities told us about the struggles they have trying to find the right types of information and support to help them at every stage of their childs life.

We could not ignore their plight and so are delighted to announce that in April 2022 we will be opening a new Parent Support Service. This will provide a single point of contact for parents of children of all ages, enabling them to access expert advice, practical interventions, and meet others in similar situations.

Young people told us they want to be able to enjoy everyday ordinary activities and events close to their home, just as their non-disabled peers do, rather than attending specialist building-based respite.

So we will soon be opening a new offering for young people aged 11 - 21. Called MY TOWN, and making great use of technology, we will provide them with an on-line calendar of locally based events and activities, which they can choose to attend safe in the knowledge that our team members will be there to support them.

And finally, we will be creating a new membership-based platform, enabling disabled people and thir families across the Borough to connect with each other, and providing much needed information and resources relevant to them.

With so much uncertainty around us it is difficult to imagine what the new 'normal' will look like, but we know things are unlikely to return to exactly as they were before the pandemic. Although this can feel unsettling it also provides many opportunities for change and progression, both for us as a charity and for those we serve.

Despite working in difficult times there have been lots of positives - too many to list or write about in this report. It is thanks to the dedication and resilience of our amazing staff and volunteers that we have continued to thrive and progress as a charity.

We are fortunate to be in a position where we can choose to invest our charitable reserves to help those in desperate need of our help. But we will need to secure long-term funding to ensure the continuation of our essential services going forward. We are grateful to everyone who supports us in creating a better society, where the lives of disabled people are truly considered of equal value and worth.



George Venus,
Chair of Trustees
and
Lesley Dodd, CEO



A Time For Reflection

Living through a global pandemic has changed all of us and the world we live in. Recognising this was central to our thoughts as we worked to create the new Strategic Plan. Never has it been more important for us to take a new approach to make an even greater impact.

There are over 8,000 children and young people aged under 25 with disabilities/SEN and an estimated 5,500 adults with a learning disability living in Ealing. Most are reliant on help from their families and neighbours.

The level of disadvantage and injustice that they and their families experience in all areas of life is quite simply unacceptable. Enough is enough - they cannot be left behind as we all work to rebuild our lives and create new post-pandemic futures.

Everyone who needs help should know there is someone available they can turn to. Our new strategy is bold, and we are driven to tackle and ultimately eliminate all the inequalities experienced by disabled people and those who support them.

Our role as a charity is to improve the lives of people with additional needs and/or disabilities and the families who care for them. To help achieve this we provide a range of support services that empower and enable people to learn new skills and enjoy opportunities and experiences that positively impact on their life. Working creatively with many partner organisations we also encourage a change in attitudes and increased inclusion of disabled people in all areas of life.

No two days are the same working at Ealing Mencap. Supporting children on a weekend away, Job Coaching young people in the workplace, enabling adults to spend time with their friends, or assisting someone to claim the benefits they are entitled to - our fantastic team make Ealing Mencap a very special charity.

One day at a time we are moving one step closer to achieving true equality and acceptance for all disabled people and their families.

Educating

Our Impact

319

Disabled children and adults lives enhanced

49,362

Hours of activities, care and support delivered

4,979

People provided with welfare advice

£2.7 million

Additional income received by Ealing residents

Participation

The Power Group – coordinated and supported by Ealing Mencap - has worked hard over the last year to make a real difference to the lives of people with learning disabilities in Ealing. Meeting every two weeks, the group volunteer their time to explore key issues, meet with professionals and chair the Learning Disability Partnership Board (LDPB).

This year the group has focused on improving the ways that people with learning disabilities can communicate with decision makers, so they are listened to and have influence over local service provision.

They have worked closely with the Director of Adult Social Services to ensure the LDPB is better structured with a clear purpose, and have created a new 5-year workplan with agreed themes to discuss and approve actions.

Pre-Covid, LDPB meetings were in person and only 5-6 individuals with learning disabilities took part to represent members of the community. Moving the meeting on-line has worked well and made it easier for more people to attend. With encouragement from the Power Group there are now 30 - 40 people with learning disabilities regularly participating, presenting, and speaking up to challenge decisions makers.

During the year the Power Group conducted two surveys: “Living through Lockdown” and “Barriers to Employment”.These enabled people to share their experiences and make suggestions about how things could be improved.

The Local Authority used this feedback to help shape the way individuals were supported post lockdown, how day services were reopened safely, and to start thinking about what services are needed to enable people to move towards and into employment.

The Power Group also supported the design of the All-Age Learning Disabilities Consultation process and will continue to do so in 2022 to ensure people are listened to and that their needs and preferences are central to the new 5-year strategy.

In October 2021 the Power Group were delighted to deliver a Workshop all about Co-Production and Participation. Around 80 professionals attended and benefitted from hearing personal experiences and a brilliant range of interactive activities.

Being included in making decisions about the services and issues impacting of their lives is so important for people with additional needs, disabilities and their family carers. Everyone present was urged to commit to embedding the values and principles of co-production and participation in the services they deliver.



Although there is still further to go for true inclusion, we have made real headway in enabling people with learning disabilities and additional needs to have their say and influence the decisions impacting their life.

Co-Production In Action - Activities For Adults

It's important to look back to see how far our customers have come, and to celebrate their achievements. Here we share just a few examples of how people have been supported to overcome challenges and develop amazing new skills along the way.



KISHAN wanted to be more involved in planning our community trips, routes and journeys.

We suggested that he could become a group leader when travelling to Action Space art sessions on Mondays. He was keen to take on this challenge, if slightly anxious about taking on this new level of responsibility!

With huge encouragement from his peers and additional support from staff, Kishan worked really hard to overcome his stress and was motivated to prepare for his new role.

Kishan developed his IT literacy skills to research best routes using Google Maps, planned the journey, including which buses to take and what time to leave in order to arrive on time.

Kishan was soon able to lead the Monday group confidently and now plans other journeys ahead of our community trips. This has not only benefited Kishan but also his peers, by setting an example. Now other customers feel motivated to develop their IT and life skills to help them explore their local community and beyond.



LUBNA

During Covid-19 many of our customers struggled to find ways to keep fit due to a lack of open facilities and support.

This lack of exercise and social isolation impacted their physical and mental health and wellbeing.

After safely returning to face-to-face services in April 2021 we set ourselves the goal of helping and encouraging people to become more active.

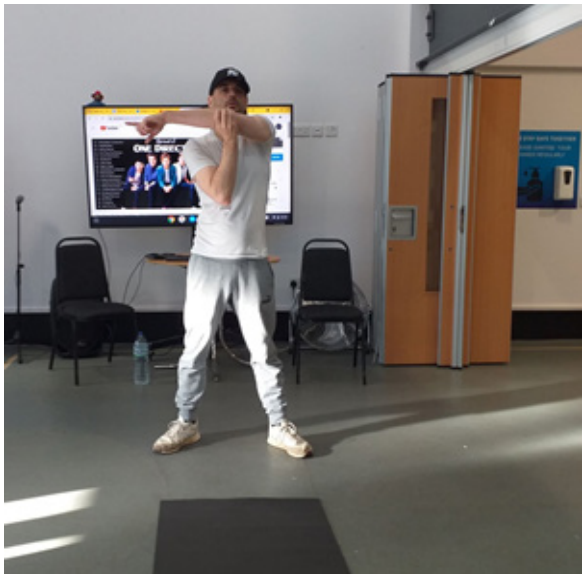
Thanks to funding from Sport England we were able to provide multi-sport sessions 4 days per week, delivered by trained coaches from Ealing Trailfinders and Disability Sports Coach.

Lubna was reluctant to participate at first and often chose to watch the sports sessions or engage in a different activity. Gradually, with staff and peer encouragement, she started taking part and found she actually enjoying these sports sessions. She particularly excelled in stretching exercises and obstacle courses.

When the funding came to an end our customers and staff used their newly-learnt skills to create their own co-produced sport sessions. Lubna joined in all these sessions really well and took an active role in the RED LIGHT GREEN LIGHT game.

Lubna's fitness levels have visibly increased and most importantly, Lubna is happier and healthier with a new found condidence!

Co-Production In Action - Activities for Adults



TOM was introduced to and developed an interest in yoga while attending our Fresh Start project.

Tom has had some struggles with confidence over the years and told us that he would like to work on his anxiety around public speaking/ performance.

We explored this with Tom and encouraged him to set himself goals. Through conversations, Tom decided he wanting to deliver yoga sessions and his aim was to be confident enough to do this when representatives from National Mencap and Sport England would be visiting us.

Leading up to this visit Tom practised his yoga routine, rehearsing and building up his confidence. Tom enjoyed this experience and delivered a great session on the day itself.

Following the visit, and with staff encouragement, Tom expressed that he would like to co-produce and deliver weekly yoga sessions to his peers.

They gave Tom great feedback and explained that Tom made them feel comfortable and they could relate to him well. Tom shared with us that he found this experience inspiring. It was a pleasure assisting Tom on this journey and seeing how much he grew as a person.



KULVINDER

During the pandemic with lockdowns and social distancing our customers faced many challenges and were not always able to understand what was happening and found it hard to express how it made them feel.

Kulvinder was brave in openly speaking about how she felt during these challenging times and she became an inspiration for her peers to express their emotions, worries and anxieties.

Kulvinder brought forward an idea to run weekly discussions on feelings and emotions to help her and her peers talk about how they felt upset and overwhelmed during lockdowns.

Kulvider helped staff co-produce this session and enthusiastically contributed to it, making a serenity tree that showcased customers' feelings and emotions from the impact of Covid 19. It also enabled customers and staff to co-produce the planners by adding feelings and emotions to sessions every week and provide opportunities for customers to speak openly about their feelings and emotions.

Thanks to Kulvinder these sessions have been a massive success and generated lots of ideas and inputs from customers about how to improve and maintain positive mental health and wellbeing.

Ealing Advice Service

There isn't a Citizens Advice Bureau in Ealing, so the Ealing Advice Service (EAS) partnership was set up to ensure every local resident can access the advice and support they need.

Ealing Mencap is the lead partner of EAS, coordinating the delivery of advice through 10 local charities, and providing specialist advice to disabled people and their families. Through this partnership EAS provides a single point of contact for residents when they need advice about wide ranging issues including Welfare Benefits, Housing, Debt, Travel Concessions, Immigration, Social Care, Family matters and Consumer Advice.

The EAS partnership core service is funded by a 4-year Ealing Council grant. Each year EAS service assists between 4500 and 6000 residents and brings in around £2.6 million in financial gains to local people through benefit applications and appeals, debt reductions and individual grants.

The past year has been a huge challenge for EAS. The end of COVID restrictions meant that debt enforcement and evictions resumed, there was a backlog of benefit reviews and appeal hearings to take place, and with the end of lockdown many people needed help with applying for Blue Badges and Freedom passes.

Additionally, many application processes went from paper-based as an option, to 'digital by default'. But many of those who rely on EAS are unable to access or use computers, and need additional assistance to get online.

All these factors, coupled with the cost of living crisis, the war in Ukraine, social housing shortage, cuts to social care, and changes to welfare benefits meant that the EAS team was incredibly busy.

Influencing

At one point there were over 170 people on the EAS waiting list with some potentially having to wait up to 6 weeks for an appointment. To deal with this unprecedented level of demand we had to restrict referrals to 'urgent' cases only and actively applied for additional grant funding to set up new projects and increase our capacity.

We are grateful to City Bridge Trust; West London NHS Trust; Public Health England; the Greater London Authority's Advice in Community Settings grant programme and Pathways who all provided additional funding which enabled us to broaden and increase the level of support we could provide to residents desperately in need of help.

Looking to the future there is no sign that demand will lessen. If anything, the cost of living crisis will push more households into debt and an increasing number of residents will need EAS help to navigate systems and claim their rights.

As we enter the final year of our Ealing Council grant, we hope that voluntary sector led advice services will remain a priority when decisions are made and the service is put out to competitive tender.

Despite the pressures, there have been some exciting developments which will hopefully make it easier for residents to access advice and their rights moving forward:

- The council's Digital Hub pilot programme should make it easier for residents to get online and make applications in their local library, rather than making a journey into Central Ealing.

- EAS has been invited by HMCTS (Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service) to work jointly on a new scheme assisting people to appeal benefit decisions online.

- West London NHS Trust has funded an additional advice caseworker to support people from BAME backgrounds who also have mental health issues.

Job Start

Thanks to Inspiring Futures Funding (from BBC Children In Need and Youth Futures Foundation)we were able to launch a new service called Job Start. The focus of this essential service is helping young disabled people who lost their job in the pandemic to get back into work as quickly as possible.

With only 5% of people with a learning disablility in paid employment before the pandemic, we were desperately concerned that without specialist help these young people would struggle to find new roles.

Over an 18 month period Job Start provided 46 young unemployed disabled people with an intensive 12 week tailored programme of support focused on the areas of job search they find the hardest.

We also delivered Employability Workshops in three local schools to enable 14-16 year olds to learn more about the different options available to them and to set them on a positive journey towards work.

The service has seen some fantastic results.

70% of the young people who had lost their job and completed our 12 week programme have sucessfully gained paid work suiting their skills, experience and preferences.

2 others have entered supported internships, and 1 has returned to college to gain essential GCSE qualifications.

These young people are now working in a diverse range of industries with local employers including The Hilton Hotel, Novotel Hotel, E. M Gardening, Bread Ahead Cafe, Hive Leisure, Planet Solutions, NHS track and Trace, NHS support, Harrison's Catering and GSK.

Congratulations to all these young people for persisting to achieve their ambitions, and to all the companies who gave them the opportunity.

Thank You

As an independent charity we have to raise over £1.5 million pounds every year so that we can help those who need us.

We are grateful to our many funders and supporters whose generosity enables us to make a difference.

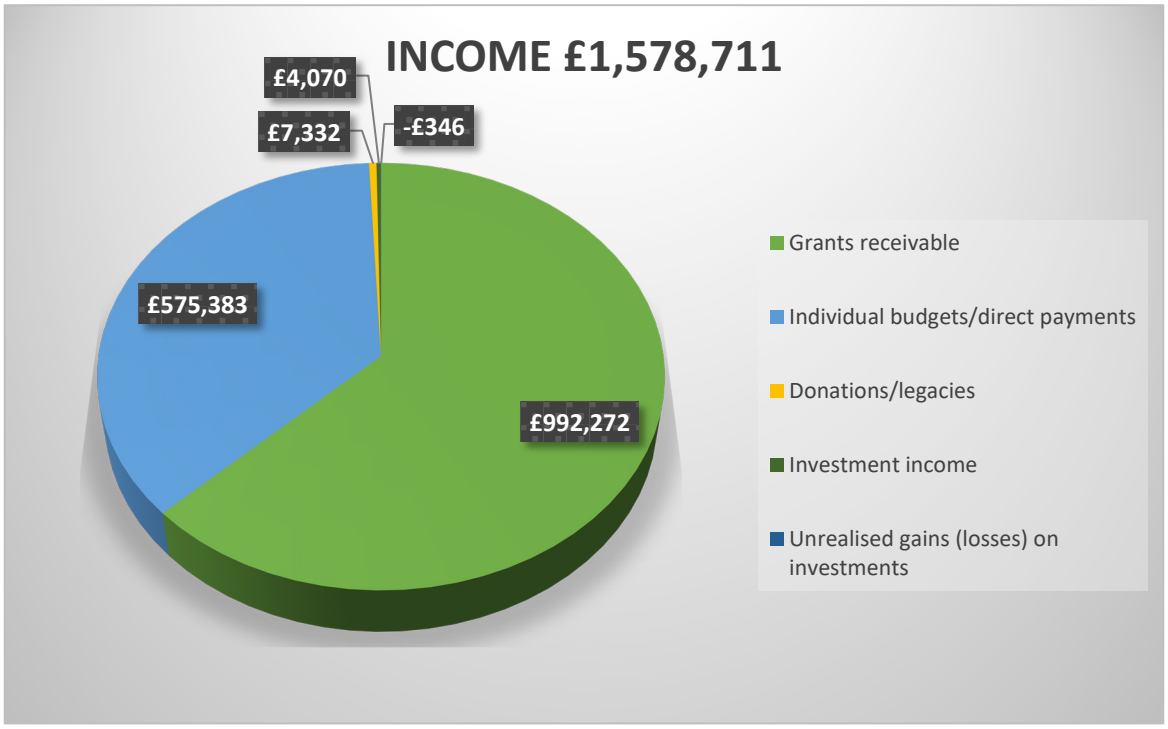
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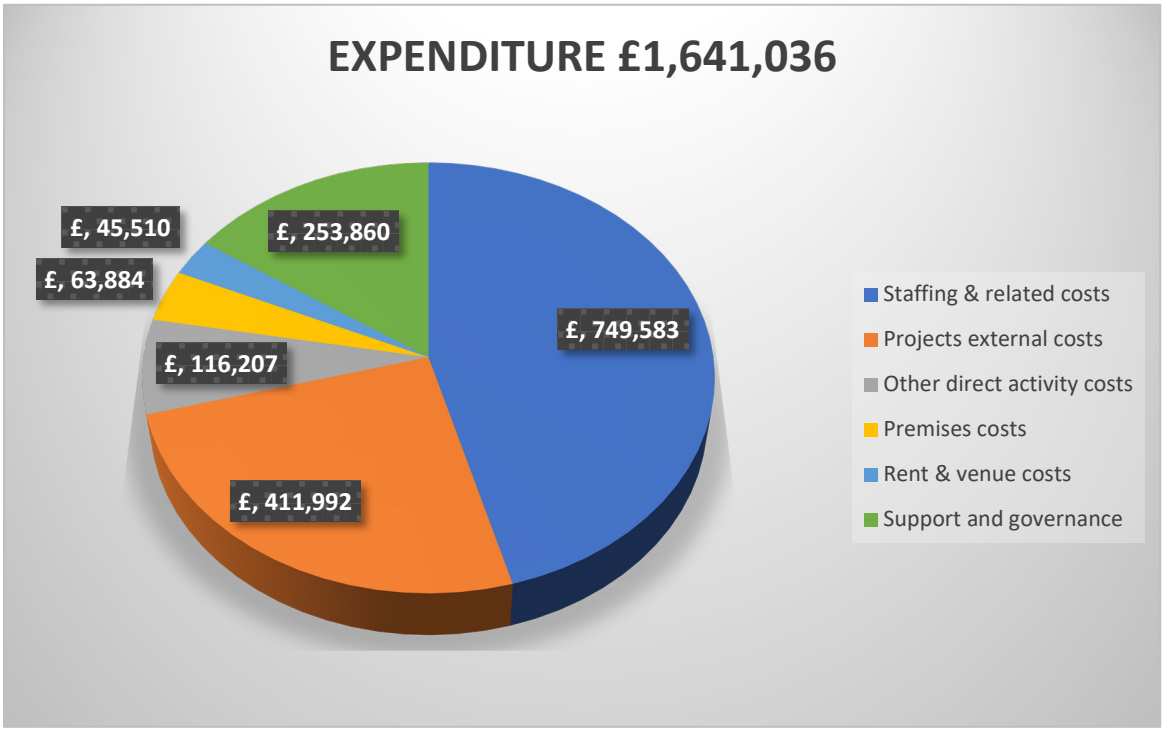
London Borough of Ealing
London Borough of Hounslow
John Lyon's Charity
City Bridge Trust
BBC Children in Need
Youth Futures Foundation
Royal Mencap
Pathways
Sport England
British Land and Good Box
Jags and Amarjit Half Marathon Fundraiser

And of course, a MASSIVE 'thank you' to our staff team and volunteers who have worked so tirelessly through the year.

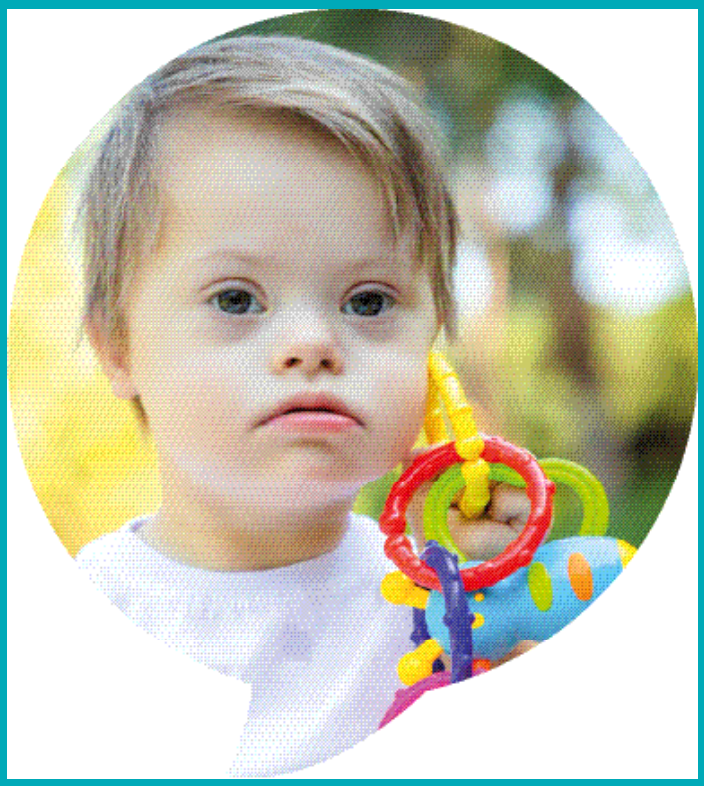
If you are able to make a one-off or regular donation to assist us to help even more people who desperately need support, you can do this safely through our website www.ealingmencap.org.uk

How we spent our money





Our audited accounts are available on the Charity Commision website www.charitycommission.co.uk



Find out more and sign up for news and events

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