

Abbey

Community Centre



Impact Report 2023-24



Abbey Community Centre, 172 Belsize Road, Kilburn London NW6 4BJ

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Charity no. 295191 Ltd company: 2028600



Annual Impact Stats

April 2023–March 2024

Food Support

providing shared meals & food bags

1610 meals provided

824 food bags distributed

454 to isolated older people

327 to low-income families

98 hours volunteering on food bags

47 free healthy low-cost cooking classes

10 free nutrition classes



Warm Welcome Space

Open to all, 5 days a week with free wifi and hot & cold drinks

1100 distinct beneficiaries

230 sessions provided

11500 attendances

5750 contact hours



Children's Services

supporting children under 5 & their families (free and low-cost places)

1329 creche places filled

431 individual families supported at our stay-and-play drop-in

36 referrals taken and signpostings to relevant services given

286 creche and drop-in sessions held



Annual Impact Stats

April 2023–March 2024

Digital inclusion and learning *making tech accessible for over 60s*

140 distinct beneficiaries
823 contact/support hours generated
264 hours of sessions
780 session places filled
17 phones & tablets and **50** SIM cards
donated to us and redistributed to
disadvantaged members



Kilburn Good Neighbours *Award winning home-befriending scheme for over 65s*

120 members supported
34 active volunteers
16 new matches established
1700 hours of befriending and
community support
23 referrals and signposting



Fitness and Physical Health

Free, accessible & fun exercise groups

334 unique beneficiaries
575 hours of provision
4232 places filled
13 different activities offered - Zumba,
gardening, Men's Fitness, Seated Yoga,
Tai Chi, walking groups and trips...



Annual Impact Stats

April 2023–March 2024

Community Activities Programme (CAP)

For over 50s to socially connect, be creative, stay active and healthy



712 active members

309 new members joined

1073 activity sessions provided

56 different activities provided

9442 session places filled

13184 contact hours with CAP members

7 regular volunteer-led CAP activities



In December 2023 we distributed a 'snap' anonymous feedback survey to members participating in activities that day.

100% said 'I feel safe & welcome at Abbey Community Centre'

100% said 'The activities/events at Abbey are accessible and inclusive. I'm able to enjoy the sessions I want to participate in'

98% said 'I interact with people at Abbey who I otherwise wouldn't have met'

98% said 'The activities at Abbey help me maintain or improve my mental and physical health'

96% said 'Abbey Community Centre helps me feel less isolated or lonely'



Creative Writing - Recycle-art - Choir - Coffee Morning - Colouring Calm - ESOL - IT - Cooking - Sewing - Crochet - Book Club - Karaoke - Bingo - plus all our fitness activities

Annual Impact Stats

April 2023–March 2024



Volunteering Opportunities

For people of all ages: to share skills, boost employability, grow local friendships, confidence and fulfilment

Completed volunteer assignments: **1,911**

Total hours volunteered: **3,803**

Number volunteer run/led CAP activities: **7**

Number volunteer run CAP activity sessions: **206**

Hours of volunteer run/led CAP activity sessions: **296**

New volunteer enquiries received: **204**

New volunteer applications received: **98**

New volunteers recruited: **25**

Our roles

Tech Buddy
Befriender
Reception
Admin/Data entry
Food Club
Community Lunch
Creche/drop-in
Activity Leader
Coffee Morning
Gardener
Trips Assistant



*"I am Barry and have been volunteering at Abbey Community Centre for some time now. I enjoy the work I do which is mainly data entry on the computer, but I do **enjoy my interactions with the public** whenever I speak with them on the phone or at reception, helping them as best I can.*

***All the staff here are very friendly** with each other and the people who come to the Centre making it a pleasant as possible experience for them. The centre is **extremely well run in every respect** from the excellent computer systems to the people who run the activities.*

*Many people are given help with food parcels and help with computer skills known as Tech Buddies. Everyone who works here is very enthusiastic about giving the best possible service to those who come here. I can **highly recommend Abbey to anyone wishing to volunteer.**"*

Case studies

April 2023–March 2024

Children's Services: Creche

Family E were **first time-parents** we got to know just before the Covid-19 pandemic. We supported them remotely during the lockdown periods, and began giving **1-2-1 support** when we resumed our in-person sessions. The child now regularly attends our Creche.

One parent has a learning difficulty and lives with **anxiety, depression and low mood**. Both parents were struggling to manage their child's **challenging behaviour** (including hitting and biting) and establish boundaries. These issues were exacerbated by the family's **lack of support network**. Mum had begun to feel completely overwhelmed and said she didn't know how to deal with her child's increasingly aggressive behaviour.

Mum accepted **support and advice** from us around managing their child's behaviour and establishing consistent boundaries. Gradually, their child developed an alternative way of communicating, rather than lashing out. We offered them a **professional referral for further support** which they accepted. The family have engaged with the professional support and are progressing well.*

*Some identifying details have been changed.



Case studies

April 2023–March 2024

Children's Services: Drop-in

Mum W, from Sudan, had attended our stay-and-play drop-in with both of her children since her youngest was 1. They found out about our services through word-of-mouth. **Mum W has limited English, and no support network in the UK.** The parents are separated, and unemployed at present.

At drop-in, we observed that her youngest child was displaying possible traits of autism. Mum W explained that she wanted to accept support but her partner had previously refused any referrals for a specialist assessment, saying there was nothing wrong with his child. Meanwhile, Mum W said **she did not know much about autism and the support available.**

The family moved out of Kilburn so we **referred them to a children's centre** in their new locality. During this time, we also helped them with nursery and school applications for their children.

Recently, Mum W reached out to us and asked for our help. She stated that the school had referred her youngest for a full autism assessment and she is expecting the result in July. However, she was worried about her ability to understand the report (which would be in English). It was very important to her that she could be fully informed and choose the right school for her child.

Therefore, we contacted the Camden Family Support team to see if they had an Arabic-speaking worker to translate. Following a couple of obstacles with securing the worker, we were glad to hear from Mum W that they had been in touch. **She feels positive about being able to fully understand her child's situation** and make the best decision to meet his needs.*

*Some identifying details have been changed.

Case studies

April 2023–March 2024



Kilburn Good Neighbours: May (86)

'It's a life saver. They've been so good to me. I've told all my family how good you are. **And without you, I could never have coped.**

I just have to phone up and ask if someone can help me and they do. Jordan helps me with my laundry and Romana comes and helps me, brings me to the coffee morning so **I can meet a lot of my friends and new friends as well.** She also comes to me on a Saturday morning sometimes, takes me for a walk around the block. I can do a third of a mile now! That's good.

So they've been very good. I realised I needed more help and rang up and asked for it, which was quite an alien prospect to me before I was not well. **Without the Abbey, I wouldn't be able to do what I can do now.** I know that. Because it's someone to see, you can come to the Abbey – as I say I come to the coffee morning sometimes and the dos at Christmas time... and you meet different people, some people who you haven't seen for years, and you have a chat about old times and that. And the people who work here, you can talk to them. And I also do Colouring Calm with Simone. That helps me, takes me back to my young days, but it's good for the mind.

Places like Abbey **help people to not be on their own, not to be lonely.** I think I would be more lonely without the Abbey and it welcomes you with open arms. Because you can come in that door and the first thing you hear is 'hello, good morning'. And that makes such a difference to a lot of people, me included. And they do such a lot for people that **without them, I'd still be indoors.'**

Case studies

April 2023–March 2024

Community Activities Programme: Rosa*

“After being diagnosed with a long health condition and spending 2 months in isolation, I’m so grateful to have found a vibrant community who bring the **healing and new friendships** I was looking for.

NHS experts call it “Social Prescribing” when the power of community helps people improve their health and wellbeing, bringing **new connections and resources**.

In January, I joined Stretch and Balance with Sharon. Being surrounded by welcoming staff, friendly participants and a professional, caring teacher reassured me I was in the right place. **Like magic, I started to feel physically and emotionally stronger every week.** After a month, I requested my GP **reduce the antidepressants** and painkillers as I didn’t need them anymore.

As soon as I felt confident, I enrolled on another activities like Crochet, Colouring Calm, and cooking. **I find the conversations with my neighbours so interesting, I love laughing together.** Please keep them running as these daily interactions are powerful resources to fight against mental struggles. Everyone is **heard, seen, and valued**.

Living alone can be challenging, however, **I don’t feel alone anymore as I know I belong** to a lovely, generous community who bring me joy every time we share tea and biscuits.”

**Name changed*



Case studies

April 2023–March 2024



Community Activities Programme: Eddie*

Eddie, 72, began attending Abbey in 2023. Due to experiencing several difficult life changes, including a relationship ending, **he was feeling alone, vulnerable and with low self-esteem.** He felt lost, with little purpose in life. Previously, he had a publishing company with a friend, but he had to close this when his friend passed away. **Retired now, he lives by himself in a supported housing building.**

Eddie was advised by his psychologist to join activities to keep him busy. He was **feeling very lonely** until he received a leaflet through his post box about Abbey activities. Though shy at first, **he felt welcome at Abbey** and decided to join the cookery classes, followed by Creative Writing as he loves poetry. He then joined Meditation, Colouring Calm, Arts & Crafts and Bingo.

Initially Eddie found it difficult being close to too many people, especially if they seemed happy and he was feeling very sad. Gradually, however, Eddie met new friends, and **found himself feeling calmer with less anxiety.** He now has a weekly routine and his **self-confidence** has improved significantly, especially in smaller groups. Eddie believes more in himself now as he can see the **positive results of what he makes** or creates.

He feels encouraged, motivated and appreciated at Abbey. He enjoys **learning new skills**, meeting, and interacting with people. Joining Abbey has been a positive turning point in his life.

'I need to have the people there, beside me, to inspire me and bring good energy. I like being with people.'

**Name & identifying details changed*

Partnerships

April 2023–March 2024



Big thanks to all our statutory, local and pan-Camden partnerships and funders for their collaboration. This year, we worked with...

LB Camden Strategic Partners team
Camden Adult Community Learning
Camden Health and Wellbeing team
Camden Supporting Communities
Camden Adult Social Care
Camden Children's Services
Camden Housing team
Camden Speech and Language team
Brent Children's Centre
SEND Drop-in (SENDIASS)
Little Village
C4 Community Centre's Consortium
Voluntary Action Camden
Volunteer Centre Camden
Central & NW London NHS Foundation
South Sudan Women & Training Development
Warm Welcome Spaces campaign
Active for Life campaign
Kilburn Priory Health and GP Centre
The Felix Project
Restart Project
Goodgym Camden & Brent
Age UK Camden
Bumble Bee Physio
Abbey Road Housing Coop
Henna Asian Women's Association
Susannah Hall & Kentish Town City Farm
CEA Capa Education Abroad
Hubbub & Defra UK
London Zoo
Heath Hands
Kew Gardens
Sidings CC
SHAK



'I work with various community organisations in the area, so Abbey is a great space for me to maintain visibility in the area and build connections with residents.'



Partnerships

April 2023–March 2024

Accessible, subsidised community space

Abbey Community Centre offers accessible, subsidised and sometimes free spaces for community groups and organisations to meet, come together and unite in social action. This year:

412 hours of community space given
217 sessions delivered
in kind value at least **£14,420** (based on £35 hourly rate)



Partner Feedback

LB Camden Adult Education , ESOL Classes

'We have partnered with Abbey Community Centre for a number of years. Throughout this time, they have been instrumental in enabling us to deliver ESOL classes in high quality premises to residents in the local community. The staff at Abbey are very helpful and responsive to our needs, they help us promote our classes and have facilities that are suitable and professionally run according to our needs. ESOL classes are life changing for many of our students, as they help to prepare individuals to access opportunities for further education, volunteering opportunities and most importantly employability.' - **Joanna Basinga, ESOL Programme Manager, LB Camden**



Partner Feedback

Age UK Camden - Debt, Money and Scam Prevention Advice Sessions

'The Abbey Community Centre has enabled Age UK Camden Information & Advice Service to provide an outreach service for debt and money advice to older local residents. Abbey Community Centre is ideally based within the Kilburn area of Camden which has been identified as an area of Camden which has high deprivation. Local residents are grateful that we are able to use the Centre as it is more accessible to them, especially those with limited mobility. Without the ability to use the Centre, Age UK Camden wouldn't be able to reach the local residents especially those with limited mobility who are unable to travel or use public transport. The Abbey Community Centre is very familiar to those in the local area so it gives them the reassurance and comfort that they are being seen in a place they know well, trust and are familiar with. The facilities at the Centre are very accessible and the staff at the Centre are friendly, approachable and helpful. Publicity of our services in the centre has been crucial to getting people involved. There is always a waiting list to access our services at the Centre.' **Ann-Marie Carrol, Debt and Money Advice Officer, Age UK Camden**

Funders

April 2023–March 2024



Our work wouldn't be possible without donations from trusts, foundations, corporates and the lottery in addition to donations from individuals. Here's who funded our work this year.

