Introduction

The Winch Community Hub was set up in unprecedented times, to provide an emergency response and support people living in North Camden affected by Covid and the lockdown. It was borne from a partnership between the Winch, local councillors, Swiss Cottage Surgery, Camden Council plus a wider network of partner organisations, funders and local members of the community who supported it to make it happen.

The lockdown measures to combat coronavirus were announced by Boris Johnson on 23rd March 2020. The hub was set up shortly after and continued to operate until September 2020. As we have entered a second lockdown we have used the learning to inform our response and work with others to ensure the needs of the community are met.

This report details our service offer, our impact, the lessons learnt, our understanding of the system and the legacy of the hub.

What did we want to achieve?

At the start of the pandemic the Winch staff team identified what we wanted to achieve in response to the pandemic. The two core priorities were:

1) Safeguard our beneficiaries and staff
2) Deliver our mission

We also asked how we wanted the community to see us in 6 months time. We identified that we wanted the Winch to have

- Stepped up
- Shown leadership
- Made a difference
- Shown it is always here to support our community
- Show that we are able to be creative, flexible and adapt
- Not put anyone at unnecessary risk
- Responded in a measured, appropriate, well informed way and have a good understanding of our community.
The effect of Covid and the lockdown on people’s lives

We spoke to our beneficiaries and asked them what effect Covid and the lockdown was having on their lives. These are the issues which people raised.

- **Social isolation and mental health issues**

  People told us they felt lonely. Those in the higher risk bracket felt particularly vulnerable. The lockdown removed their freedom to even go shopping. Housing conditions where overcrowding or a lack of space exacerbated this feeling further. Those living in a single room in temporary accommodation particularly struggled. “My home is not designed to be in it”. People told us they felt anxious and depressed. Services, groups, activities and centres that people relied upon to meet their peers or get support were physically closed. Online support for many was not a real substitution. Parents worried about the psychological effect of their children being socially isolated and unable to socialise with their friends.

- **Financial struggle and precariousness**

  People told us they were worried about their finances and how they were going to get through lockdown. Some told us they were “afraid of being hungry”. People were unable to go to work or had been furloughed. Some people had lost their jobs. There was a concern about how people were going to afford basic essentials such as food and nappies whilst paying their bills.

- **No respite for families with everyone at home all day**

  Children were not able to attend their nurseries or schools and were stuck at home. This caused a strain on parents and children. Parent’s told us that they were struggling to cope. Young carers were having to support their family members full-time. There was no respite. It made life harder to do simple things like go food shopping. Young people’s exams were cancelled. Some children and young people did not have any device to get online and do their school work, connect with their friends or access online support.

- **Activation of the community to help one another**

  People wanted to get involved to support others in the community. Parents living in temporary accommodation wanted to support the distribution of food to others. People spoke about the acts of kindness that they were starting to see. People were speaking to their neighbours for the first time and checking in on one another.
The Service Offer

The Winch Community Resource Hub was set up to meet the needs of some of the most vulnerable during the coronavirus.

Who did we support?

We said that we would support residents living in Belsize and Swiss Cottage ward that met one of the following criteria:-

- people unable to leave their houses due to their health conditions and are self-isolating
- older people that live alone
- families living in temporary accommodation or families that require additional support
- young people that require additional support

We matched volunteers and our staff with people that needed deliveries of food, medication and one-to-one support by telephone calls.

We provided free meals and groceries for those that are struggling with food poverty by setting up food distribution at the Winch on Mondays and Wednesdays. Free bags of food were put together which included frozen meals, essential groceries and other items from City Harvest. Some households picked up their food package from the Winch others had it delivered to their front door. Some beneficiaries wanted volunteers to go shopping on their behalf.

The Emergency Fund allowed the Winch to respond to the needs of beneficiaries as they arose. This meant that we could buy essential items on their behalf such as tablets and laptops to get online, nappies, craft materials, white goods or the cost of doing laundry.

In June we added face-to-face sessions for families where parents and their children could book a session and come to the Winch. They had a Covid-secure session outside in the playground with the parents and the children having time apart.

We delivered craft bags to families so that children had crafts and activities they could do at home.

Volunteering for the Hub

People were able to volunteer for the hub if:-

- They were over 18
- Had a DBS check (if they do not we will register them so they can still volunteer but there will be a time lag before they can start)
- Lived in Camden

If they have an underlying health condition they will only be able to do one-to-one support for their own safety.

All volunteers received an online training session from us which was compulsory to attend in order to volunteer with us. This covered:-
1) introduction to the Winch and the Winch Community Hub
2) working safely to prevent COVID 19 eg. using PPE equipment etc. and lone working
3) safeguarding overview plus mandatory completion of online safeguarding training supplied by Camden Council.

**How did we promote the service?**

The service was promoted using both online and offline media.
- We delivered leaflets to the Chalcots estate, Hilgrove estate, England’s Lane hostel and other areas in Swiss Cottage.
- We designed and displayed banners advertising the service from our building
- We used social media across all of The Winch’s channels, and redesigned our Website to prompt the offer and enable self-referrals
- We featured the Winch Community Hub in our online newsletter
- We emailed partners and beneficiaries to inform them about the service, and made direct approaches to local schools.
- We convened neighbourhood Zoom meetings to share information and learning
- We featured in local, online services directories
- We wrote press releases to the CNJ and Hampstead High

**What else did we do outside of the Hub?**

At the start of lockdown we used Zoom as a way for different groups to meet together. This included a mixture of trying to replicate f2f activities and trying out new ideas. North Camden Zone Community Organisers tried to deliver online fun activities for the Chalcots Estate including an Easter Bonnet making session, ideas for kid’s activities and Bingo. For our parents of under 5s we delivered parent training sessions and invited a speaker. Our children aged 4 - 12 that normally attend our after school sessions attended a daily exercise session called Shake it Off. Young people took part in online gaming sessions, youth work group sessions, received
initial phone calls gauging the level of support they wanted through the lockdown period and regular 1 to 1 mentoring sessions online.

Our Impact

In total the Winch Community Hub supported **320 households** during lockdown. Some of our key achievements include:-

**We alleviated food poverty by:**

- Set up a food distribution hub to put together food parcels with staff and volunteers
- Distributed **1634 food parcels** to **128** households.
- Provided **93 supermarket vouchers** to people that needed to buy their own shopping
- Volunteers went shopping **153** times on behalf of families and older people.

**We reduced social isolation by delivering**

- **175** young people and adults plus **33** children with one-to-one support.
- **1207 one-to-one sessions** either over the telephone or face-to-face.
- **152 Face-toFace sessions supported with 27 families** where parents and their children got to spend time separately.

**We reduced the digital exclusion of**

- **14 children and young people** were provided with **9** tablets, **3** laptops and a mobile phone and access to the internet. This allowed people to continue with their studies, provide a respite to the parents living in temporary accommodation and access online support.

**We alleviated the hardship faced by families by**

- Providing **101 craft bags** for children to do activities and play.
● The Emergency Fund also bought toys and provided essentials for ? households and provided nappies, laundry costs, a new fridge and the moving costs to relocate out of temporary accommodation.

**We increased active citizenship by**

- Recruiting **50 volunteers** in the local community and provided them with a platform so they could help local people that needed their support.
- Creating the infrastructure to support volunteering by delivering training, providing DBS checks and ongoing communication and support.
- **40 volunteers** delivered shopping, food parcels, medication, befriending calls and helped to co-ordinate the distribution of our food packages at our twice weekly centralised Food Hub.

**We strengthened the community by**

- Matching together 40 volunteers to support families and older people living in xx households in the community. Where possible we matched the same volunteers and beneficiaries to build social connections.
The Winch Community Hub in Numbers

Over 19 weeks we supported 320 households. This included:

- 131 families
- 283 children and young people
- 56 older people (60+), of whom 43 were over 70
- 23 adults, between 26-60

270 of the households supported were Camden residents (87%). Of the Camden residents 25% lived in Swiss Cottage 32% lived in Belsize Park.

We drilled down into the hyper-location of residents that we supported. Perhaps unsurprisingly given the work of the North Camden Zone and the proximity of the housing we found that

- 54 lived on Chalcots
- 40 lived in England’s Lane Hostel
- 14 lived on Hillgrove
Referrals

We received 142 new referrals* into the service that were previously unknown to the Winch of which 133 were appropriate referrals. Over 50% were self-referrals and the rest were from a mixture of statutory services, voluntary sector and health. The referrals were to support older people (56), families (49 with 34 from England’s Lane), adults aged 26-60 (23) and young people (5).

Referrals Breakdown

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Referral Source*</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-refer /Family Member</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheltered Accommodation (Mora Burnett, Lymington Road and others)</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Hampstead Women's Centre</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swiss Cottage Surgery</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camden Council (Early Help, Housing, SS &amp; Shielding Line, Families in Focus, Camden Safety Net - DV)</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voluntary Action Camden - Social Prescribing Team</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbey Community Centre</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age UK Camden</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North London Cares</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Councillor</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>142</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Service Breakdown

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Number of people received the services</th>
<th>Number of instances</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>FOOD</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Packages</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>1634</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Vouchers</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deliveroo</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combined Food help</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>1731</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SOCIAL ISOLATION</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One-to-ones (including F2F)</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>1274</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Face to face only</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EMERGENCY DEVELOPMENT FUND</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency Development Fund * (not including food vouchers)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>VOLUNTEER SHOPPING/MEDIATION</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer Shopping</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer Medication</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOYS AND TECHNOLOGY</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Families receiving Craft Bags</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>97 children received</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital Exclusion Reduced</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Alleviate Poverty Items
- 1 fridge
- 1 moving service
- 1 packet of nappies
- 1 laundry session
- 8 toys/crafts

### Digital Exclusion Items
- 3 laptops
- 9 tablets
- 1 mobile phone
- 3 phone credit packages
Feedback

Feedback from Beneficiaries

We conducted a survey between 26th June and 17th July 2020 to measure the effectiveness of the service and find out the relevance of our service. Surveys were completed online and by telephone. In total we received 44 responses.

92% of respondents rated the service received as a 4 or a 5.

The comments received from beneficiaries highlighted the importance of the service and the impact it had had.

The Winch Community Hub fostered a sense of community

- *The Winch was very supportive, a place where I always found compassion, friendship. Community is very important, especially in these difficult times.*
- *It is nice to know you are there as a community support and it is much appreciated. Very useful and caring organisation.*
- *Can't praise enough an amazing job that people at The Winch do. I want to give back to this organisation and always happy to help.*
People felt cared for and supported

- The Winch response is an example of caring organisation in the local community
- The Winch actually extended a caring arm to allow our oldest child to attend the after school club to give us some respite as well as regularly checking in.
- The Winch is an example of kindness in the community

People rated the quality of the service

- Jacob and Patricia (volunteers) big thank you. I am very impressed by all the services I have received. Really appreciate it.
- so grateful and the volunteers are amazing
- The Winch went far and beyond the expectations
- Nothing, you have all be so exceptionally wonderful

The Winch was the main source of support for some

- The Winch was the only one who helped us.
- we had lots of support, especially from the winch

Feedback from Volunteer Survey

We conducted a survey of volunteers in June 2020 to measure their experience and the impact of volunteering. Surveys were completed online and by telephone. In total we received 22 responses out of a possible 38.

100% of respondents at the end of the Winch Community Hub said they would be happy to be contacted to volunteer again if the hub reopened. 90% said they would be interested in volunteering in another role.

Other Feedback

It gave people that volunteered an appreciation of their privileged positions

- I have learnt that my own situation could be worse and to be grateful
- I have been humbled by the experience

It helped the volunteers to get through lockdown

- As much as I am helping the beneficiaries, they are helping me too by keeping structure in my life

It advanced people’s skills and confidence

- This has given me confidence to deal with people
- I have felt good that a beneficiary was able to confide in me

It gave people an appreciation of the importance of community

- I have learnt to give my time to others and that zoom brings us together
Creating The Infrastructure for the Winch Community Hub

In order to meet the needs of our community the Winch created the conditions and the infrastructure to make the Winch Community Hub a reality and improve the ability of the communities to work together.

We consulted with our community to find out their needs at the start and during the process. We used this information to adapt to the needs of the community.

We levered in more than £95k in resources through our own Winch fundraising and applying for funding to provide an emergency response to the local community to meet their needs.

We reconfigured the Winch staff team in order to optimise our response to the crisis. The North Camden Zone team was central to the response of the Hub leading on the set up and delivery of the hub services. Staff such as our receptionist were redeployed as a Volunteer Co-ordinator. Representation from across the different Winch teams met together on a weekly basis to ensure a holistic approach.

We developed online training and recruited volunteers through the Winch Community Hub.

We were effective at using new online tools and resources. We used Zoom to host all of our training and meetings. We used Google Docs - in particular Google Sheets and Google Forms which allowed real time, collaborative working. We also used Miro to collaborate and co-design new processes and structures as a team. We used Survey Gizmo to consult our volunteers and beneficiaries. We referral forms and sign up forms on the Winch website.

We had weekly reporting and planning meetings so we could gain a timely picture of how the service was doing and could respond in a timely way to any issues. For example our referral rates were lower than anticipated in the beginning so we were able to make concerted efforts early on in our communication to rectify this.

We used extensive communication both online and in print to promote the Winch Community Hub. We used our different social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter to share to our current audience and to try and reach new people. We also used the Winch Newsletter to share the progress and impact of the hub and developed our own branding #kindnessconnected. We delivered around 4000 leaflets through resident’s doors.
Optimising the Conditions for the Collaboration

We collaborated with existing and new local partners in a number of different ways to meet the needs of our community:-

We set up the Winch Community Hub, a completely new service from and co-designed it with local councillors, Swiss Cottage Surgery, Camden Council and the Winch. Our Steering Group met on a weekly basis to share knowledge, information, connections and progress.

We set up a food distribution operation through working with partners to secure free food to top up the essential food items were buying on a weekly basis plus food storage capacity. Our partners included the Hall School, the Arsenal Foundation, Camden Council, Waitrose and City Harvest.

We provided a platform for collaboration called Connecting the Communities, by bringing people together on Zoom from across the system on three occasions with more than 40 participants which included the newly formed Mutual Aid Groups, local politicians, GPs, voluntary sector organisations, Camden Council, funder and residents.

We worked in partnership with Mutual Aid groups by doing a mutual exchange. We paid for leaflets to promote the help they could provide and the Winch Community Hub. They delivered the leaflets in the Swiss Cottage ward.

We developed new referral routes in and out of the service working in partnership with the Social Prescribing team particularly at the end of the project. We also gained referrals from 10 other organisations including Camden Council, the voluntary sector and health.

Our partnerships supported us to get good press coverage both locally and nationally. Camden Council supported us to get an article in the Camden New Journal. City Harvest connected us with the BBC One Sunday Morning Live on 12/07/2020 with Ruby wax coming to visit.
Lessons Learnt

We could work in a new way

The crisis showed the Winch that we can work in a completely different way, set up a new service, reconfigure our staff team and meet the needs of new beneficiaries that were outside of our normal remit such as directly supporting older people. We were not physically located together and were only meeting together online. We showed that we could rise to the challenge, build on this cross-team collaboration and working holistically as an organisation to respond to the needs of the community.

We should have set up even quicker

We wanted to make sure that all of our systems and processes were in place before the service went live. We were expecting a lot of referrals in the first instance and we wanted to get the foundations right so that we would be able to deliver a good service. We had to put in place a Data Sharing Agreement with our local surgery before they could refer to us. We needed to ensure that our staff and service users were safe, risk was minimised and we were Covid secure. In the weeks that we spent getting everything in place other pop ups that filled the vacuum. We initially had less referrals as a result. We learnt that in a crisis it is not about achieving perfection. It needs to be good enough and getting that balance right can be tricky.

The importance of flexibility in a dynamic and emergent environment

We were flexible, responsive and adaptive in order to meet the emerging needs of the community in a dynamic and changing environment. We developed a new Covid Secure face-to-face service for parents and children outside at the Winch. We extended our geographical reach from focusing on Swiss Cottage and Belsize Park to respond to requests for help that could not be supported elsewhere. Volunteers supported residents new ways to meet their needs including a letter exchange between a volunteer and the person she was supporting; delivering letters; taking a vacuum to be recycled and taking a computer to the repair shop.

Supporting active citizenship in their community regardless of the organisation

The project was a great reminder of all of the assets in the wider community. People were desperate to volunteer and help others in their local community. We provided a mechanism to match that need with people’s generosity of spirit to help others out. At the end of the hub 90% of the volunteers indicated that they would still like to volunteer in some capacity. We have connected our trained and DBS checked
Volunteers with other local services. We have connected volunteers to Belsize Library, QCCA food delivery service and the Community Links Covid Buddy service.

Our strength based values were compromised by a paternalistic emergency response

The crisis demanded an emergency response to meet the pressing needs of our beneficiaries. In our haste to meet the immediate needs of people we initially matched people with volunteers based on availability and geography. We forgot to start with their strengths. Who were they? What did they have? What could they offer others? We rectified this midway through and started asking both volunteers and beneficiaries about their strengths and interests and matched them on their shared interests.

The importance of regular dialogue to avoid making assumptions

During the crisis it was easy to assume and that food was the most important issue. Through dialogue and consultation with our beneficiaries it became clear that for some picking up their packages from the Food Distribution Hub, it was actually the personal connection with staff and volunteers that they really valued over the food. This was also confirmed through our survey. We were one of the first organisations in Camden to set up face-to-face sessions. Families on an individual basis came to the Winch play area outside with two members of staff present. One to meet with the parents and the other to do activities with their children. Those 45 minutes gave them essential respite and time apart in a Covid secure environment.

Our relationships with our existing beneficiaries meant we had a deeper understanding of their needs

The Youth Team, the Play Team, the Family Support Team all reached out to the people that they work with at the beginning of the crisis. They continued to provide support to their beneficiaries over the telephone or online and from June onwards face-to-face. Their ongoing relationships meant they had a deeper understanding of the needs of the community. People were more willing to reveal their situation and their needs as the crisis progressed. We used this intelligence as a team to inform our decisions about the service as the crisis evolved. The one-to-one support was also vital in supporting people with their mental health.
What did we learn about the system through our response to the crisis?

The crisis surfaced and exacerbated existing inequalities that pre-dated Covid

Families living in temporary accommodation had already been facing hardship and living in difficult circumstances before Covid hit. Some were accessing food parcels from City Harvest through the Winch. The crisis meant that more families needed this support or became aware of our services. Lockdown meant that the reality of living in a single room in a hostel was more acute. There was no respite for parents. People struggled with their mental health.

The crisis exposed the fragility of the support networks for those living on their own with mobility or health issues

One disabled man that we received as a referral had run out of food as he was unable to resolve his benefit issues in person. He did not have any family or friends nearby. His carer only did a limited number of hours. We were able to get him a Deliveroo and then arrange shopping on his behalf thereafter. Another older person living on their own with no family nearby had a friend that used to shop on his behalf before Covid. Lockdown stopped this. Silverline was also over subscribed so he could not get a befriending call from them. We were able to arrange weekly shopping and a befriending call.

Vulnerable people were not supported by the government but were helped by charities and the community

People that were shielding due to being clinically extremely vulnerable were eligible for essential food parcel deliveries delivered by Camden Age UK. People who did not fall into this category but were still vulnerable did not qualify for the government assistance. We started delivering the Winch Community Hub and other groups across to people who fell below the threshold yet were still vulnerable such as older people aged over 70. For the Winch this meant that we supported a new cohort of beneficiaries which included older people as a result. Our service provided them with a safety net.

Covid safety measures to protect staff and volunteers meant that there was less flexibility to meet the needs of beneficiaries

Residents with Covid or were self-isolating contacted us about issues that fell between the cracks. Covid safety protocols across statutory and the voluntary sector prevented staff and volunteers from entering people’s homes. Home visits for most services stopped. Community buildings such as children’s centres closed for activities. Staff were mainly working from home. This meant that the external professional support that people relied on were no longer available further isolating people. This ranged from Camden tenants unable to get urgent repairs done in their homes to families no longer seeing their Family Support Worker’s face to face.
The easing of lockdown provoked anxiety for the vulnerable
The easing of lockdown meant that vulnerable residents were officially allowed to leave their homes. The clinically extremely vulnerable were no longer eligible to receive essential food parcel deliveries at the start of August 2020. In Camden many groups that had popped up closed. However some did not feel safe to resume normal life and go shopping again. This caused anxiety and worry. Only the Winch and Queen Crescent Community Association continued to provide home deliveries. We remained open and were the only place operating in NW3 who had capacity to take on new referrals during July and August.

The importance of creating shared spaces that had representation from all of the actors in the system
We set up Connecting Communities which was a multi-stakeholder group from across the system. This included residents, health, politicians, the newly formed Mutual Aid groups, Camden Council, food distribution organisations, funders and voluntary sector organisations. Camden Council hosted a weekly VCS leaders meeting which included VCS organisations and council officers. It provided space for individuals and organisations to share how they were responding to the crisis. It was helpful to gain a picture of what was going on in our local neighbourhood. The online meetings meant that it was easier to convene a larger amount of people at shorter notice. We convened the meeting neutrally rather than driving an agenda. This created space for dialogue and discussion. New ideas were generated. The Connecting Communities forum had the potential as a space for collective action in the future.

The crisis brought new people wanting to volunteer in the neighbourhood
The crisis meant that there was an influx of new people that wanted to volunteer across Camden. It awakened people’s social consciousness to want to help others. We were able to recruit 50 volunteers through both the Winch promotion and using the Time to Spare website.
**What is the legacy of the project?**

We have written up all of the methodology, systems that were created and learning, so that if we needed to reactivate the Hub, any staff member within the Winch will have all of the information, infrastructure, training plans, online forms and publicity they need to run the service.

We will be sharing our learning through this report and convening a Show and Tell event so that some other people can benefit from the insights we gained.

Some of our citizens have remained active and are continuing to support 5 of our beneficiaries as they have made a connection with the person they are supporting. They are doing befriending calls and going shopping on behalf of some of the older people. We have also signposted our volunteers to other projects in Camden that needed support.

We are continuing to provide weekly food parcels to around 20 families living in temporary accommodation through our partnership with City Harvest, who provide free food deliveries.

We have set up the Winch Support Fund so that we are able to respond to the emerging needs of our community as new needs arise. This is a pot of money which will allow our staff working in the community to broker the needs of the individuals or families we work with where financial support

We are continuing to provide support to our core Winch beneficiaries through the other services that we run. We have referred everyone else that still needed support to the special prescribing team to ensure they get the assistance they need.

The Winch Community Hub has raised our profile as an organisation. Ruby Wax has asked to come back to volunteer for 1 week.

The Winch Community Hub has strengthened our partnership with other organisations and shown what can be achieved when we collaborate and work together towards a common aim. This will be something that we can build on going forward for future initiatives.
Professional Narrative

Account from one of our Youth Work Manager’s about the support received by a young person as part of the Winch Community Hub

One young adult lost a close friend due to a stabbing he witnessed three years ago and has constantly struggled with the mourning process especially around the anniversary of the death and his friend’s birthday. They have always spoken openly and honestly about how they feel and the effect this is having on their mental health.

Our worker had signed off promise work (intensive 1 to 1 support) with the young adult but after seeing the effect this incident was still having on the young adult he arranged for weekly meets and check ins. The young adult has accessed several other organisations, such as St Marys Community Trust, The Hive, My Online Therapy and a couple grievance counselling sessions.

During the lockdown period their mental health deteriorated and as the anniversary of the death and the young person's birthday, they called our worker saying they were having suicidal thoughts and needed help as soon as possible. Our worker went to visit that day and maintained daily check-ins through phone, online and face to face. The young adult also requested additional mental health support which our worker sourced and arranged.

The young adult was involved in a serious incident as a perpetrator during this period and our worker in and alongside a worker from St. Mary’s Community Trust had to work quickly and intensively with the young adult and their legal representation in order to ensure they were aware of the mental health issues involved. This resulted in an outcome that avoided a custodial sentence and a support system being put in place where they are now attending therapeutic support sessions three times a week.

The young adult has said it was the isolation and the lack of interaction they were able to have with peers and those they would call usually for support that came with lockdown, that led to the deterioration of his mental health. They said that since the daily check ins with our worker and knowing that this service and line of support is still available has had a massive positive impact on them, but he is keen not to stop there as they don’t want to ever go back to the “dark place” they found themselves in at the start of lockdown.
Case Studies of beneficiaries and volunteers of the Winch Community Hub

Family

Nusrat Naser is over 40. She is a single mum with a two years old daughter. She has lived in England’s Lane Residence for two years and recently had to move to Wolverhampton as the hostel is closing.

I used to work for UCLH negotiating contract deals. Before and during lockdown I was not working due to my health condition. I enjoy reading books, I like to follow what is happening in the world and I am interested in history. I can sing and I am a very good cook.

Due to my health condition, I had a food parcel delivered by a volunteer to my door, which was very convenient. Page came and talked to me in the park at a distance, gave me lots of tips on how to entertain my daughter, as well as gave me a bag full of activities (coloring books, pencils, arts & crafts ideas and tools). When the lockdown started I was at my breaking point. I was also cautious of my health condition and could not go much out to do shopping.

It had a huge impact on my life. I would have had a nervous breakdown without Page’s support. She pulled me together by helping both emotionally and practically. Otherwise, I would have gone crazy.

I would like to say thank you to all the staff members at the Winch who worked hard during the lockdown and were helping people in need.

Older person supported

Elizabeth is 89 years old. She is retired, has lived in Camden for 70 years and lives on her own.

I was a photographer and a journalist and I still like to write for pleasure. I have a dark room in my house. I currently do small art projects together with local organisations like North London Cares and I hopes to have one of my pieces displayed at the South Bank.

I received food parcels from the Winch, partly because I have a breathing problem and I can’t wear a mask. I was advised to shield because of my age and health and was also referred to the Winch by Maggie.

Lunches are always a problem because I have dementia and finds it difficult to prepare food and remember recipes. The frozen meals have been particularly useful. Lactose free items are usually expensive so the food from us helped financially. I have felt better health wise, since receiving the food parcel.

Jack was my volunteer. When it’s all over we would like to have a socially distanced coffee in front of my house. We also exchanged phone numbers and would like to keep in touch in the future.

Jolly good for volunteering and I hope that everything goes right with everything you do.

I really did appreciate the help from the Winch! Thank you all for your hard work and I hope we will get a chance to meet properly one day!
Young people supported

Sandrine is a young person and has lived in her current flat for 8 years.

In my spare time I like to do craft, craft, watch YouTube and listen to podcasts, educate myself on feminism, racism and activism, listen in on other communities of colour and how they fight discrimination. I like to learn about make-up, skincare, ethics of consumerism, film and television criticism, critical thinking etc. I love dancing around my flat by myself for like an hour from room to room!

I have very severe mental health illness and at the begin of the lockdown I had just come out hospital for my mental health illness and I was feeling very raw had been in there for a month. I really needed help getting back to know life, everything other support system had closed down and I was so scared that I was to have zero support

Right after getting out hospital I met my keyworker Yen it was a miracle in itself. I had pretty much given up on getting any form of support since everything was closed, I say this in order to highlight how much having support saved my life, I had someone to talk to on a weekly basis when I was in the most vulnerable state. I always end up hospitalised at least once a year and the transition from hospital to home is ALWAYS rough, this has been the best transition I have had in the last 10 years of dealing with this

I feel valued, I feel seen and heard, I feel cared for and looked after, I feeling so many positive things, I am so grateful that it’s beyond words. I am a write but words escape me when it comes to describing my gratitude

Yen, thank you for getting me into skincare, thank you for creating safe space for me to be myself, thank you for holding me down when I felt weightless and about to leave the ground, thank you for being my home, a safe harbour, a mentor, a best friend, a teacher. YOU ARE A GODSEND. I have been saved, I have been saved, I have been saved.

Winch Community Hub Volunteer

The truth is that I’ve been surrounded by some very kind people in my life, which I’m deeply grateful for, and I believe no one can do well without a bit of support and kindness. Kindness is something which comes back the more you give it away – I sort of knew this before, but now it’s something I see every time I’m at The Hub or the food banks.
We would like to thank everyone that helped us to make the Winch Community Hub a reality and supported our community. In particular we would like to thank:

- All of our wonderful volunteers and Winch staff
- Swiss Cottage Surgery
- Cllr Nayra Bello O’Shanahan
- Cllr. Tom Simon
- Cllr. Luisa Porrit
- The Hall School
- Waitrose
- City Harvest
- Arsenal Foundation
- The Kindness Offensive
- Voluntary Action Camden - Community Links

The Winch Community Hub Funders