

Local Wellbeing Networks – Summer Event
Thursday 20th July 2023
Whittington Park Community Centre

Launch of Islington Local Wellbeing Networks
Listening and Social Action Campaign

What is a Listening and Social Action Campaign?

There are two interconnected parts to a Listening and Social Action Campaign.

A listening campaign is a strategic effort focused on actively and attentively gathering insights, feedback, and information from an individual or specific group of individuals. The goal of a Listening Campaign is to better understand the perspectives, concerns, needs, and opinions of the target audience, which can then inform decision-making, communication strategies, and actions.

The narratives obtained from the listening aspect of this campaign will inform the development of Action Groups across the Local Wellbeing Networks based on residents being supported to design local solutions to address local challenges/priorities i.e. local residents informing and designing their own responses to identified priorities.

The Council's new Strategic Plan recognises the critical value of this work and wants to put communities at the heart of its ambition for a more equal future for Islington ([Fairer Together Islington](#)). "In order to transform outcomes for some of our most disadvantaged and marginalised communities, we need a different relationship. One that involves working alongside, learning from and understanding our communities and putting them in the driving seat in terms of delivering change".

The whole idea of the Community Organisers programme is to enable a shift away from dependency on old politics with service providers towards one where residents, people who live and work in the community, have agency to act because they're effectively organised, and so are able to engage effectively in the democratic process. The Local Wellbeing Networks and Local Action Groups are mechanisms through which this shift can take place.

A Social Action campaign is a coordinated effort aimed at promoting a specific social or political cause, raising awareness about an issue, or encouraging individuals to take specific actions to create positive change within a community or society as a whole.

The effectiveness of a Social Action Campaign can be measured by factors such as increased public awareness, policy changes, behaviour modifications, and shifts in public perception related to the targeted issue.

On the launch day participants were engaged in a discussion. An example of a listening session.

The Discussion Activity at the 20 July launch event

- There were five discussion themes (one per facilitated table/station): 1. Children and young people being part of and leading change, 2. Tackling inequality and the harm it causes, 3. Feeling safe in the community, 4. Health and Wellbeing, 5. The environment.
- Each participant chose the table/station they felt most passionate about or where they wanted to experience different perspectives/viewpoints.
- Discussions lasted 45 minutes.

Participants were informed that the results from the discussion groups will be taken to the Local Wellbeing Networks with the aim being to create a vision and, inform their next stages of action.

The opening questions were based on what good things they see happening in their community and, the things that made them happy or caused concerns etc. There emerged a clear view that, for them to be involved in the decision making process, the voices of marginalised peoples had to be captured and made part of the conversation.

Overall there was a lot of positivity expressed about Islington when compared to neighbouring boroughs. One of the groups expressed an appreciation of the wide range of support and provision for the early years and young people in the Borough. This was coupled with comments on how connected the community centres, the council and other services are. It was also pointed out that Islington is one of the few boroughs where all primary school children get free school meals.

“Islington has a lot of events that encourage community cohesion. There are services that support diverse communities, and a strategy for tackling inequality”... “I think events like these are a good thing because it gets people interested and open to sharing their ideas and opinions in a safe space”.

Throughout the discussions the importance of listening coupled with taking action was expressed time and again. “Rather than simply listening and not following up with action”. This said, it was emphasised that “People should not be ‘done to’ but be empowered to do for themselves”.

Cliff Joseph
Community Development Manager – Islington Local Wellbeing Networks