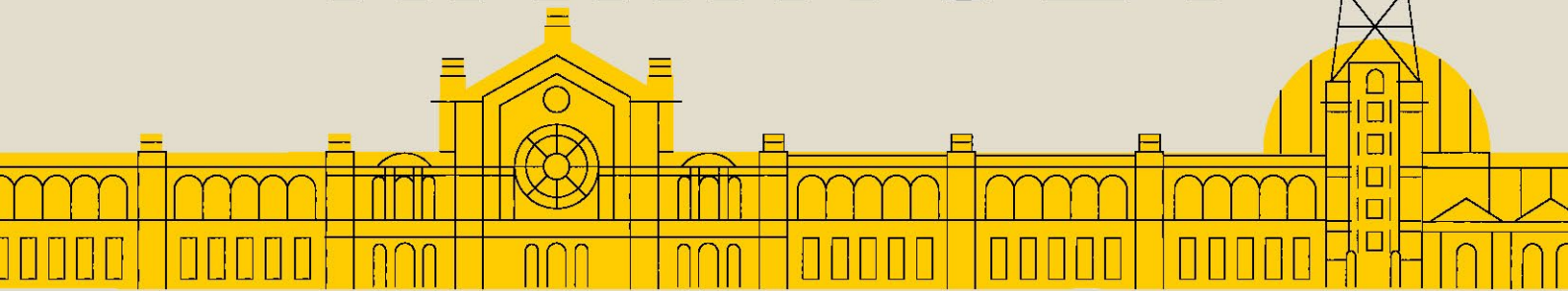
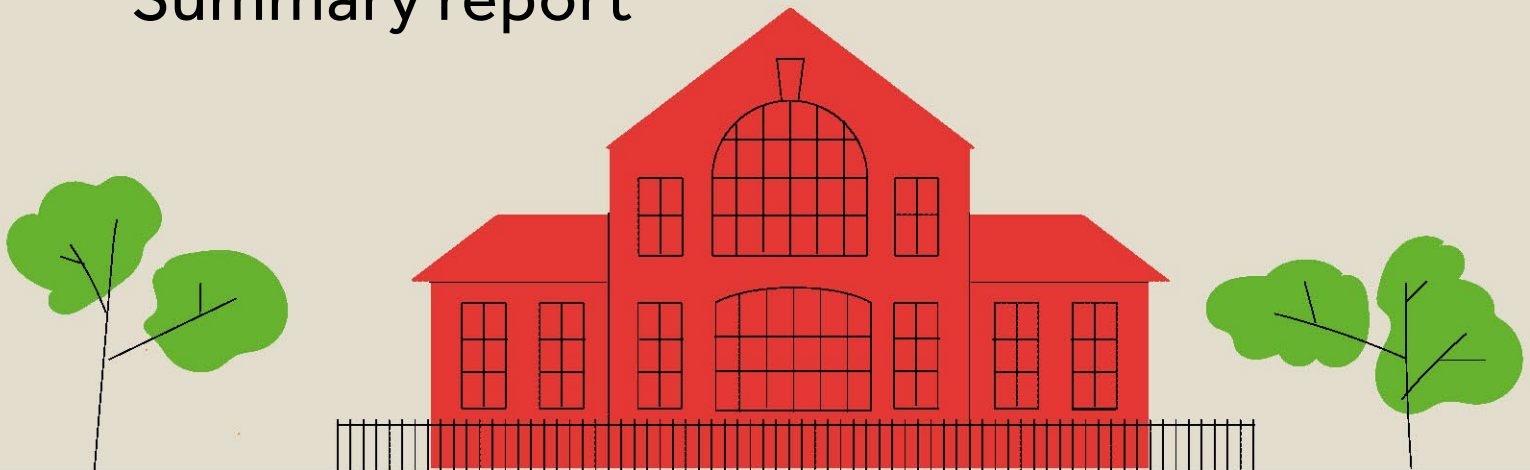


OPPORTUNITY HARINGEY



Haringey Employment Gap Research Project Summary report



Haringey Employment Gap Research Project

Summary report

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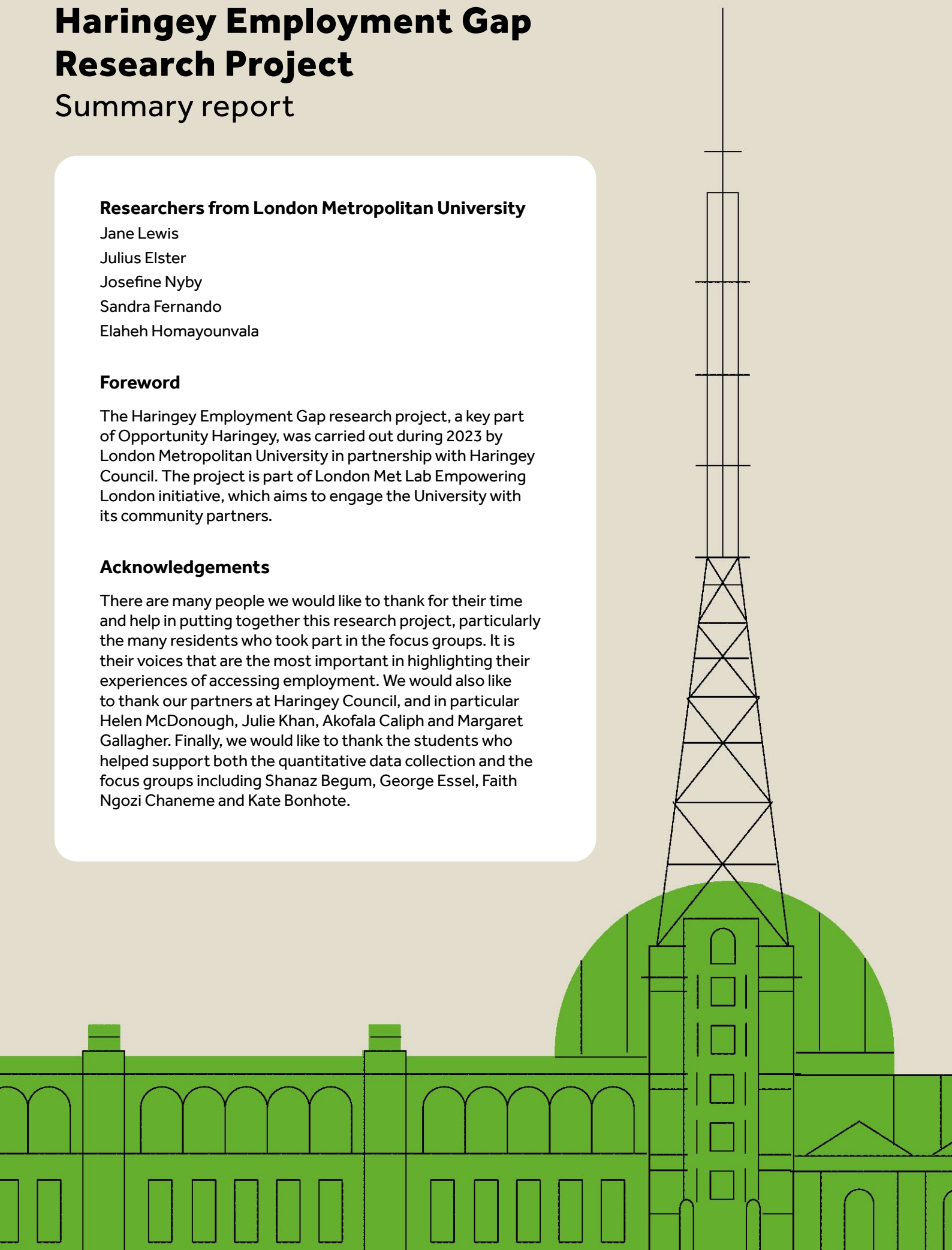
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Foreword

The Haringey Employment Gap research project, a key part of Opportunity Haringey, was carried out during 2023 by London Metropolitan University in partnership with Haringey Council. The project is part of London Met Lab Empowering London initiative, which aims to engage the University with its community partners.

Acknowledgements

There are many people we would like to thank for their time and help in putting together this research project, particularly the many residents who took part in the focus groups. It is their voices that are the most important in highlighting their experiences of accessing employment. We would also like to thank our partners at Haringey Council, and in particular Helen McDonough, Julie Khan, Akofala Caliph and Margaret Gallagher. Finally, we would like to thank the students who helped support both the quantitative data collection and the focus groups including Shanaz Begum, George Essel, Faith Ngozi Chaneme and Kate Bonhote.



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THE CONTEXT

Haringey Council is developing '**Opportunity Haringey**' – an inclusive economic framework. The aim is to shape and drive forward the Council's ambitions for a local economy that moves from reacting and responding to the challenges of the pandemic to a pro-active partnership approach that unlocks the creativity of residents and businesses to harness Haringey's strengths to secure economic prosperity for all that is fairer and greener. Opportunity Haringey is being developed by undertaking economic analysis and engaging and listening to businesses, residents and a range of local and strategic partners in order to understand the range of needs, demands and aspirations across the many diverse communities in the borough.

The Haringey Employment Gap research project, a key part of Opportunity Haringey, was carried out during 2023 by London Metropolitan University in partnership with Haringey Council. The project is part of London Met Lab Empowering London initiative, which aims to engage the University with its community partners.

The aim of the project is to identify those groups in Haringey who experience the highest levels of unemployment and to highlight the barriers they face in accessing jobs. It is well known that Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic residents, people with disabilities, young people and lone parents experience higher levels of unemployment and this research project seeks to identify which particular groups are most affected and what the main barriers are in accessing work.

The research project looks at how well existing employment advisory services in Haringey support Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic residents, residents with disabilities, lone parents and young people to get into work.

This **Summary Report** sets out the key findings and recommendations from the Haringey Employment Gap research project. It should be noted that while there are key differences in terms of the barriers to accessing work experienced by the different target groups in this research, such as race discrimination and discrimination against people with disabilities, there are also many common barriers that are experienced across all the target groups. Some of the key common barriers include low expectations and confidence to attain meaningful employment, poor experiences of employment support services, particularly of the Job Centres and for many women with children, especially single parents, unaffordable childcare.

It should also be noted that many of the key findings and recommendations echo those of the recent **No Wrong Door report by City Hall and The Young Foundation** (2023) and **The Commission on the Future of Employment Support interim report** (2023) reports, particularly on how important it is to join up skills and employment support to deliver an accessible offer for job seekers.



BLACK, ASIAN AND MINORITY ETHNIC GROUPS

Aim of engaging Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic residents in Haringey

Haringey is a diverse borough in terms of ethnicity. The total resident population was 264,000 in 2021, two thirds (67.1%) of whom are from a Black or Minority Ethnic (BME) or Other White Ethnic group, as compared to 60.7% in London as a whole. It is well known that the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic population experience higher levels of unemployment than the White British population. The aim of engaging Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic residents is to identify the specific barriers they experience in accessing employment, to improve the targeting of employment support to Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic residents and to reduce the employment gap.

Main findings

- **A slightly lower proportion of ethnic minority residents are in work than white residents** – ethnic minority residents comprise 24.5% of the working age population but only 21.9% of the total in-work population.
- **The employment rate is lowest for Bangladeshi/Pakistani residents (66.9%), other ethnic group (68.1%) and Black/Black British residents (69.9%)** as compared with 77.7% for the white population and 80.4% for mixed ethnic group.
- **Ethnic minority residents comprise a higher proportion of the unemployed** – 32% of the unemployed as compared with 24.5% of the total working age population.
- **Unemployment in the borough is higher among the ethnic minority population at 33% than the white population (22%)** and is especially and exceptionally high among the small Bangladeshi and Pakistani population (3,200) (78%).
- **Institutionalised discrimination** – was highlighted by Black participants in particular as a major barrier in accessing employment and in accessing 'good' employment and promotion opportunities when in work.
- **Childcare** – the lack of affordable childcare options emerged as one of the most significant barriers to accessing work for Black and Asian women with pre-school age children, and for single parents in particular. Childcare costs and the need for **flexible working hours** were key barriers for almost all women with pre-school and school age children. These structural factors force women into lower paid jobs which can be available at hours and times that suit women with young children when affordable childcare is not an option.
- **Digital exclusion** – as job application processes have increasingly shifted online, many participants experienced digital literacy, and digital poverty, as barriers to accessing employment.
- **Lack of experience** – lack of relevant experience emerged as a major barrier to successfully accessing work for many Black and Asian participants. Many jobs require experience and getting a first step on the ladder is a major barrier. It had an impact on narrowing participants' ambitions and expectations, often forcing them into low paid (flexible hour) options where they do have experience such as in hospitality and cleaning.



BLACK, ASIAN AND MINORITY ETHNIC GROUPS

- **Low expectations in terms of what jobs are realistically accessible** – experiences of structural barriers to employment left many participants with low expectations as to what is possible in terms of getting a job, the intersection of racism and lack of childcare, of low skills and of the ingrained attitudes of some employment services and advisors, can result in the low expectations experienced by many Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic participants.
- **Experiences of employment advisory services were mixed, with experience of using the Job Centre almost entirely negative** – participants found them demoralising with a strong sense that the service is target driven and the focus is on getting unemployed residents into low paid and skilled, entry-level jobs

with little attempt to build on people's ambitions to seek higher paid and skilled roles. Numerous participants also spoke of cancelled interviews and training without being informed. There were mixed but mostly positive experiences of **Haringey Works**, including **unanimously positive experiences of the Broadwater Farm outreach advisor based in the community** and many good experiences of advisors at Haringey Works, Wood Green. However, there were also a significant number of participants who had not received replies to 'cold' email contacts, of cancelled interviews not followed up and of some advisors not being helpful.

Key recommendations

It should be noted that many of the following recommendations should form the key elements of a strategy, led by the Council, to target employment support to all those groups in the borough suffering the highest levels of unemployment – including Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic residents, residents with disabilities and young people.

- 1. Address race discrimination in the delivery of employment support services** in the borough – again this will take many forms of action, including staff training, but Haringey should lead work with its partner organisations to challenge stereotypes and assumptions and the lack of recognition of Black and Asian unemployed residents' skills and aspirations.
- 2. Target employment support and advice services to the particular groups in the borough suffering the highest levels of unemployment** – this should include Black African, Black Caribbean and 'other ethnic' residents but also the smaller Bangladeshi and Pakistani communities with especially high unemployment levels as well as people with disabilities and particularly people with mental health problems and young people. The Council should set **targets** to reach each of these groups both internally and with its partner organisations.
- 3 The key recommendation concerns engagement and the development of an outreach strategy both within the Council and with partners.** The Council needs to take a lead on engagement with 'target' groups of unemployed people to

develop stronger links and networks, including specific engagement strategies with Black and Asian residents and with residents from other ethnic groups experiencing especially high levels of unemployment, with young people; and with people with disabilities.

As part of a successful engagement strategy, the Council working strategically with its partners **should further develop its employment support community outreach strategy and provision.** This should include a commitment to building on the model of outreach advisors based in the community, such as that currently operating on the Broadwater Farm estate. This should start with 'target' communities which have high levels of unemployment, face barriers in accessing jobs and have low levels of engagement with the Council's employment services such as Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic residents, young people and people with disabilities.

The outreach strategy should:

- Map the social spaces used by the target groups.
- Identify and establish links with key 'intermediaries' and partners.



BLACK, ASIAN AND MINORITY ETHNIC GROUPS

- Promote the co-location of employment support services jointly with key partners in the social spaces used by target communities including setting up an effective Haringey Works presence in key community spaces used by target communities in the borough and making computers and space available.
 - Build the capacity of the voluntary and community sector to target and reach those communities experiencing the highest levels of unemployment.
 - Broaden the remit of employment advice support roles in Haringey Works to include outreach and community development skills in new and existing posts.
 - Review and develop more effective information on and signposting of employment support services in the borough.
 - **Further integrate Haringey Works and Haringey Learns services** – to include developing a community outreach strategy for Haringey Learns; setting up the co-location and joint service delivery between Haringey Learns and Haringey Works; enhancing adult vocational training in the borough for target communities, ensuring Haringey Learns services reach target groups; increasing free ESOL and digital skills ACL provision and providing free ESOL and digital/ IT skills training in social and public spaces and community centres used by target communities.
- 4 Haringey Works and the other employment advisory and support services in the borough should be based on a person-centred, case-work model, with small numbers of cases.**
- 5 The Council both internally with Haringey Works and with partner employment advice services, including the DWP, should oversee** encouraging higher expectations and 'good' employment outcomes – a key barrier emerging from the focus groups with Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic participants was the low expectations of employment advisory services.
- 6 The Council should lead on a review of current childcare policies and services in the borough** – and prioritise the expansion of affordable childcare within the context of national policy, targeting childcare services to the needs of single parents and to Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic women.
- 7 The Council should lead on enhancing links with employers in the borough** – developing paid work placement and apprenticeship schemes; mentoring opportunities; providing industry specialists to advise, coach and support unemployed young people and other target groups back into employment; further develop effective job fairs and employer workshop sessions in community spaces and develop greater disability awareness among large, medium and small employers in the borough.



PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Aim of engaging people with disabilities in Haringey

People with disabilities were also prioritised in this research project. It is well known that people with disabilities experience higher levels of unemployment than the non-disabled population. It is also the case, however, that people with disabilities are a highly diverse group with diverse needs, experiences and abilities.

Main findings

- Approximately **14% of the population in Haringey are disabled**.
- Almost **40% of people with disabilities of working age in Haringey are not in employment**.
- Almost **70% of the disabled working-age population was aged 40-59**.
- The disability category most frequently reported by all age groups of disabled people comprised of individuals with **mental health conditions** (35%), followed by those affected by **physical impairments** (32%).
- The **income after tax of disabled Haringey residents is relatively low**, with a majority falling within the range of £1000 - £2000 per month range.
- The education level varied amongst the disabled population, where 30% had no qualifications, and 30% had a Level 4 qualification or above.
- It should be noted however, that the disability employment gap in Haringey in 2021 was down to just under 20%, compared to 35% a few years earlier.
- The main findings from the focus groups show that the key barriers to accessing work were **unfair treatment, discrimination and lack of disability awareness, and lack of training and support by employers**.
- An additional obstacle entailed **delayed diagnosis of neurodiversity**, thereby impacting the individual's educational trajectory, as well as employers' inflexibility to accommodate the person with this diagnosis.
- Furthermore, the potential employer's perception of people with disabilities, as well as a **lack of clarity about the employer's responsibility to make 'reasonable adjustments'** were also highlighted as a barrier.
- **Challenging experiences with the Job Centre, Connected Communities, and inflexible support programmes were also considered barriers**.
- **Lack of information about and availability of support**, residents with disabilities are very keen to work but need support which they are either not aware of or is not available. Participants were **not aware of what support the council has to offer** in terms of employment opportunities.
- Unemployment and underemployment is affecting residents with disabilities **not only financially, and also in terms of their mental health**.



PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Key recommendations

Based on these findings, the key recommendations are that the Council should:

- 1. Work more closely with partner organisations to target employment support and related services to people with disabilities, impairments and long-term health conditions, in particular people with mental health conditions.**
- 2. Develop an employment support outreach strategy (see above), mapping and reaching out to** community spaces used by people with disabilities and health conditions, and then offer services supporting this demographic in those places.
- 3. Provide wrap-around, holistic services for people with disabilities and long-term health conditions based on a case-working model of service delivery.** This should include employment support, health and well-being, including income maximisation, benefits and cost of living support.
- 4. Coordinate a programme of disability awareness and training with local employers.** The evidence suggests disability awareness and training among employers is perhaps the single most important way forward if people with disabilities and health conditions are to be enabled to access employment.
- 5. As one of the largest** single employers in the borough, the Council can play a lead role in employing people with disabilities and long-term health conditions and in providing people with disabilities with the flexibility and disability awareness that would act as a good practice model to other local employers.

This could include - reviewing its targets for employing people with disabilities and long-term health conditions; conducting an audit of the numbers of staff employed with disabilities and health conditions and a disability awareness audit to ensure the needs of people with neuro-diverse conditions, learning disabilities, people who are deaf and people with impaired sight are addressed; reviewing recruitment processes to ensure they are disability aware and undertaking a programme of disability awareness training with line managers in service departments.



YOUNG PEOPLE

Aim of engaging young people in Haringey

The main aim of engaging young people in Haringey is to look at ways of improving existing employment support services, and, in effect, reduce the employment gap in the borough. To gain the understanding required to meet the needs of young residents and achieve improved employment outcomes, we need to hear from the young people themselves, who are one of the groups suffering the highest level of unemployment in the borough, and assess the barriers they face in accessing jobs.

Main findings

- Of the 33,000 young people aged 16-24 years in Haringey, 66% or 19,900 are economically active, **while 34% or 10,400 are economically inactive or unemployed.**
- Haringey has a **higher employment rate among the economically active population of young people compared to the national average.** However, analysis of the types of sectors where young people are employed in **Haringey indicates that the public administration, health and education sector and the distribution, hotel, and restaurant sector account for the highest number of young people.**
- **Little employability support in school** (secondary and sixth form college), with most schools mainly interested in preparing students for sixth form and university.
- **Many young people need to build their self-esteem to develop 'job readiness'**, it was notable that **mental health issues**, especially anxiety and depression, were brought up in the focus groups as important factors to address.
- **A lack of (employment or otherwise) initiatives for 18-25-year-olds** was highlighted in the focus groups.
- Several focus group participants spoke about the issue of **employers asking for experience**, even for entry-level jobs and internships, within the field of work that they were applying for. Difficulties in gaining relevant experience prevent young people getting a foot on the employment ladder.
- Many participants spoke about **adverse employment experiences and precarious working conditions** which had demotivating effects on how respondents pursued jobs.
- **Institutionalised discrimination and prejudice** were also mentioned, with young people in the focus groups saying they did not know how or where to report the issues experienced.
- Except for Job Centre Plus (JCP) and Haringey Works, there were **little knowledge of employment services, events and information available in Haringey.**
- **Many of the focus group participants seek support and job opportunities without using employment services; e.g., within their own networks** which may include helping family members with care or business.
- **Some stated that the system implemented by Job Centre Plus facilitates little to no support in getting a (meaningful) job** and is an environment not suitable for young people.



YOUNG PEOPLE

Key recommendations

- 1. Secondary schools and sixth form colleges should work with employability support services** in providing **in-school and -college support for students** (e.g., employability and CV development workshops), especially if they show little interest in going to university.
- 2. To identify, track, and support young people in Haringey who are not in education, employment, or training, a working group would be advisable,** monitoring young people whose activities are unknown and providing them with information, advice, and guidance about learning, training, and employment opportunities are key considerations in **influencing job outcomes and their attitudes towards employment.** Schools should also ensure that young people's destinations are shared.
- 3. Young people with mental health issues** have difficulty finding work, and poor job market experiences contribute to prolonging the problems. Alongside **initiatives to reduce stigma surrounding mental health issues, a person-centred approach** that gives young people skills in finding work, managing money, social skills and staying in work is recommended.
- Limited access to personalised support was stressed in the focus group discussions. The model for **Haringey Works, Haringey Learns and other employment advisory and support services** in the borough should take into account a more **person-centred approach** based on a case-work model, with small numbers of cases. As a key element of this, the borough's employment support services should prioritise **encouraging higher expectations in the employment outcomes of unemployed clients.** This should be through a number of avenues including staff training and the further development of paid work placement and apprenticeship roles.
- 5. The Kickstart Scheme** was spoken about in favourable terms. The government has withdrawn this scheme, which has left a gap in **subsidised employment for disadvantaged young people.** Similar **ways of engaging with employers** in the future should be explored as they enable young individuals to work with employers who, in turn, are working towards **supporting more inclusive recruitment practices.**
- 6. One-to-one personalised support** for young people should be provided through an expansion of mentoring provision. Many young people are demotivated by precarious employment conditions as employability training and job hunting etc. are unlikely to lead to anything particularly meaningful. This leads to **poor engagement,** which can be mitigated with mentoring support. More **support with long-term employment goals** can elicit more **stable employment trajectories** and avoid the demoralising trade-off between pursuing what they love and having an income.
- 7. Local community and youth programmes** could provide **extra support for young people who already face barriers or are part of a family with complex barriers to finding a job.** This can improve the lives of not only the young person, but also their wider communities. **Bruce Grove Youth Centre, Living Under One Sun and Tottenham Hotspur Foundation** are in a good position to facilitate extra support for young people and their communities.
- 8. More research into in-work poverty and precarious employment** conditions is required since there appear to be gaps in information about the quality of jobs available for young people in relation to job-search motivation.
- 9. Employability skills** training should also include **basic rights,** such as information about employment contracts, paid and unpaid breaks, sick/annual leave, and the National Minimum/ London Living Wage. In the workplace, basic rights also include knowing **anti-discrimination** laws and **protected characteristics** such as age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, marital status, pregnancy, race, religion, and sexual orientation.



Haringey Employment Gap Research Project

Summary report

