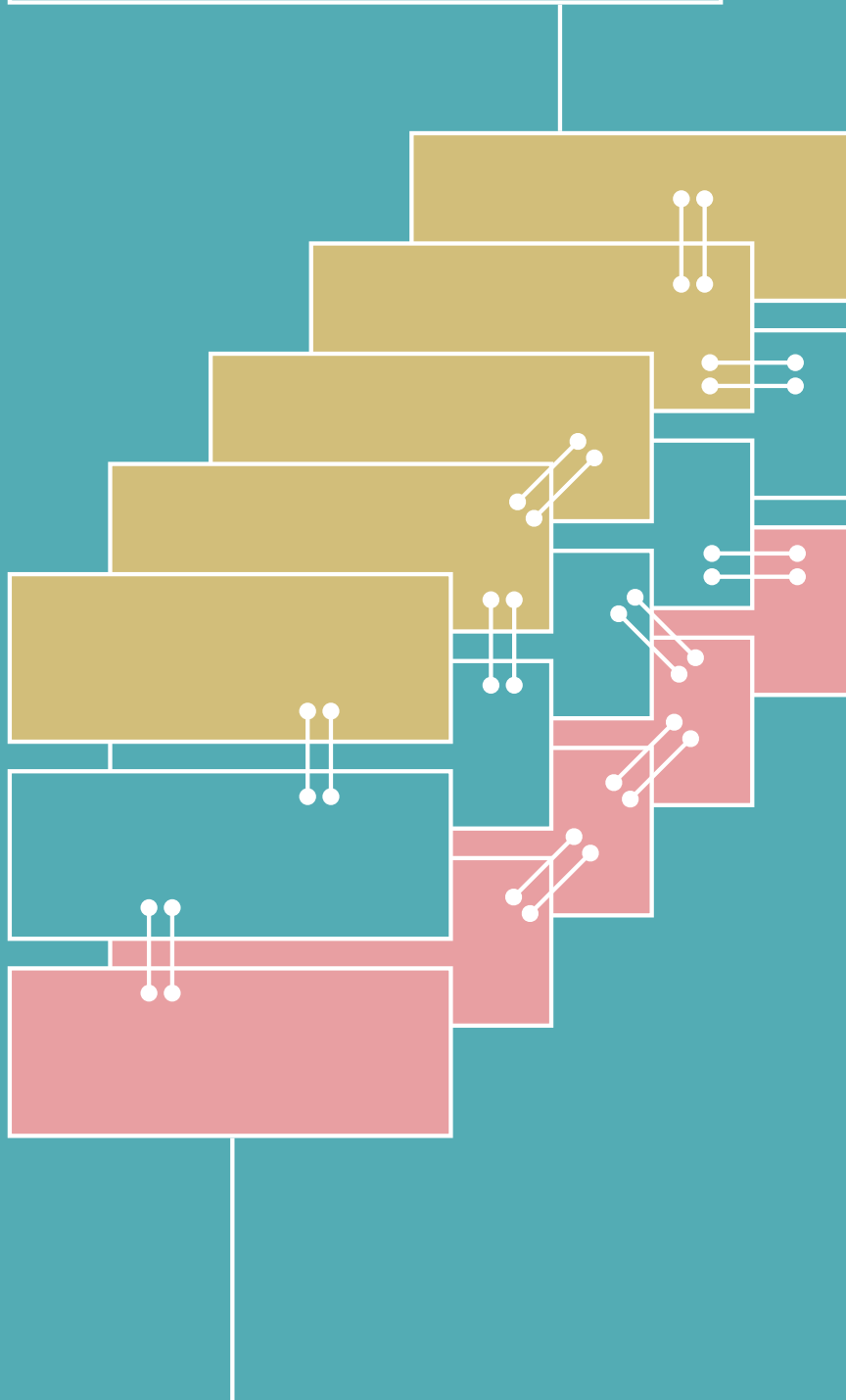


GROUNDSWELL PROJECT



GROUNDSWELL PROJECT 2025/6 Impact Report



FIND



CONNECT



AMPLIFY



COMMUNITY
FUND



At the heart of Groundswell lies a robust peace and community resilience-building methodology

A Dedication to our Founder 1978-2026



We lost Hadiya suddenly at the beginning of 2026. This impact report is dedicated to her legacy.

This is our vision in Hadiya's words...

At Groundswell Project, we believe that more resilient and cohesive communities are the antidote to hate, extremism and polarisation. We also believe that nurturing stronger communities is upstream of wider initiatives that seek to tackle these phenomena. Thus, activities that cultivate greater humanisation, understanding and a sense of togetherness at the local level are sorely needed if we are going to create a world that we are proud to pass on to future generations.

The work of our network of Community Connectors is vital in achieving the above aims, since it is rooted in lived experience and local leadership. They have worked tirelessly over the past few years to build bridges between residents, community-based organisations and statutory partners. These bridges act as communication channels through which conflict can be resolved, disinformation can be challenged, services can be accessed and local multi-agency safeguarding work can be better delivered.

By investing in relationships at the grassroots level, we address the root causes of polarisation rather than simply responding to its symptoms. By creating safe spaces for dialogue, encouraging collaboration across diverse groups and supporting community-led solutions, we help transform tension into understanding and shared purpose.

Community Connectors understand the unique strengths and challenges of the neighbourhoods they serve, enabling them to respond quickly, sensitively and strategically. Through partnership-building, skills development and consistent engagement, they foster networks that are resilient in times of crisis and proactive in times of stability. In doing so, we are not only strengthening communities for today, but laying the foundations for a more united, compassionate and hopeful society for generations to come.



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National Lottery Community Fund Objectives



Groundswell Community Connectors are funded by the National Lottery Community Fund.

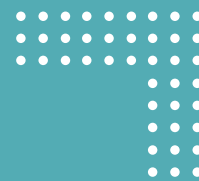
The fund objectives are:

1. Benefit communities across the UK
2. Scale up proven impact, e.g. strengthening your organisation's infrastructure and improving support for the people you already work with
3. Support people experiencing poverty, disadvantage or discrimination
4. Help create lasting change to services or systems
5. Benefit communities across the UK
 - i - running activities in more than one UK country
 - ii - working in partnership across countries
 - iii - showing how what you learn can be used to inspire systems change in other areas of the UK
6. Help create lasting change to services, or systems - change, to how services or systems work. This is often called systems change. We want to fund work that leads to transformational change. The kind that lasts, not just short term support, e.g. tackling the root causes of issues and helping prevent problems before they happen, changing rules, habits or ways of working, giving communities more control over decisions and resources, helping people and organisations work together differently and challenging what's seen as important or possible
7. Community involvement and voice. This includes children, young people and people with lived experience.

The following is our story of how we helped achieve these objectives during 2025/26.



Who we are



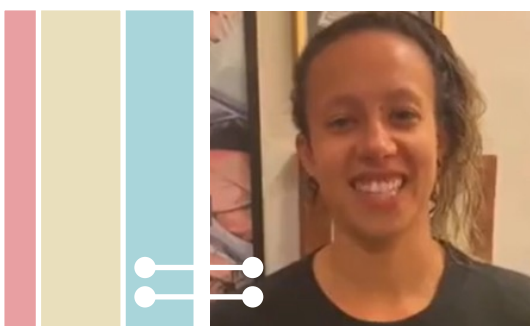
Adeel Ibrahim, Glasgow Community Connector

Adeel joined Groundswell as a respected sportsman and youth mentor from Pollokshields, one of Glasgow’s most diverse communities and, at times, a target for hate activity. He brings people together through food, faith networks, and sport. Using these ingredients, he seeded Kabaddi Scotland - a new, diverse, minority-led sports body that engages everyone from the local youth right up to Scottish policymakers using an ancient sport to bring them together.



Sokhara Goodall, Lewisham Community Connector

Sokhara Goodall was a football player before joining Groundswell Project. She tackles deprivation in Lewisham by widening access to opportunity and supporting residents to realise their potential. Working with Millwall Football Club Trust, local businesses, and community wellbeing groups, her regular job fairs have attracted thousands and are now a permanent employability hub at the club grounds.



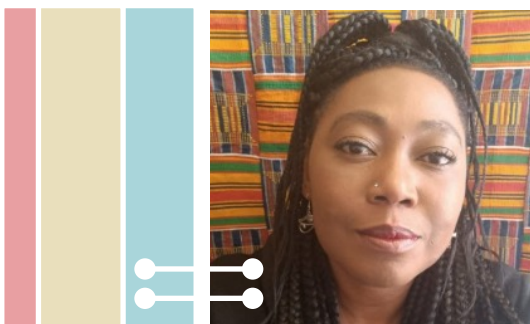
Leela, Luton Community Connector

Leela is a wellbeing coach and social media strategist who grew up on the outskirts of Luton during a period when hate preachers drew national attention to the city. Her work centres on connecting and amplifying the many organisations in Luton addressing the root causes of hate, including isolation and mental health challenges affecting young people, men, and women. Her biggest celebration this year was a Comic Con for Luton (see title page picture).



Angela Ankeli, Manchester Community Connector

Angela was a community-based artist and journalist before joining the Groundswell team. She has convened a network of more than 100 organisations in Manchester to collaborate and address shared priorities. This collective approach has resulted in a new annual festival celebrating Longsight’s cultural diversity and the creation of a multi-use venue for groups unable to sustain separate premises.



What we do



Groundswell works to prevent hate, extremism, and polarisation by strengthening the ties that bring communities together. Through this approach, Groundswell helps create safer, more connected communities where people can thrive together. This is explained through our late Founder Hadiya Masieh’s ‘Find, Connect, Amplify’ motto...



FIND

When entering a community, we quickly map and understand pre-existing peace/bridge building initiatives and analyse what the landscape looks like. This allows us to gain a deep contextual understanding of the communities’ unique problems and opportunities.



CONNECT

Building a network of positive actors allows us to galvanise a diverse coalition to begin working together to find new ways to maximise impact. This can be connecting activists with each other or helping them engage with the public or private sector. We then help design and facilitate peace building events by connecting isolated communities with fun and engaging neighbourhood activities.



AMPLIFY

To amplify the impact, we then provide marketing through our national and local network, leveraging: local and national news outlets, and social media platforms. By gathering and amplifying positive events online we provide a united presence in defiance of a media landscape full of negativity.

The year in numbers



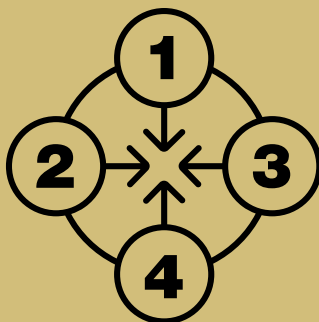
Groundswell connections created on the ground

377



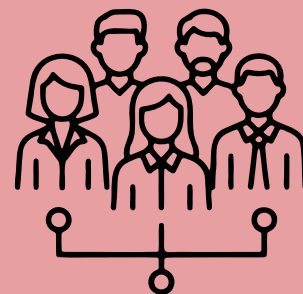
Partners in our network across the four focus areas from third sector, businesses, tech

30+



Connected projects and initiatives in 2025/6 across the four focus areas

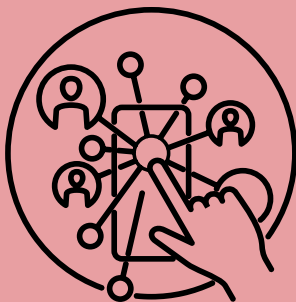
7.5K



Local residents participated in Groundswell-connected activities in 2025/6

Groundswell amplification to UK audiences

24



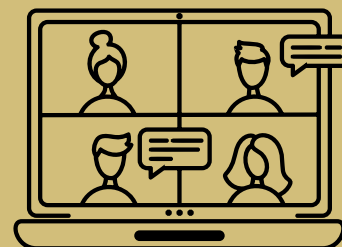
Media mentions of connected projects on local and national media

465



Positive Actor Organisations on the Kindness Mapper

110K



Online reach* including social media and newsletter opens

* Figures are impacted this year by the passing of our founder Hadiya

2025/6 Connected activities and festivals overview

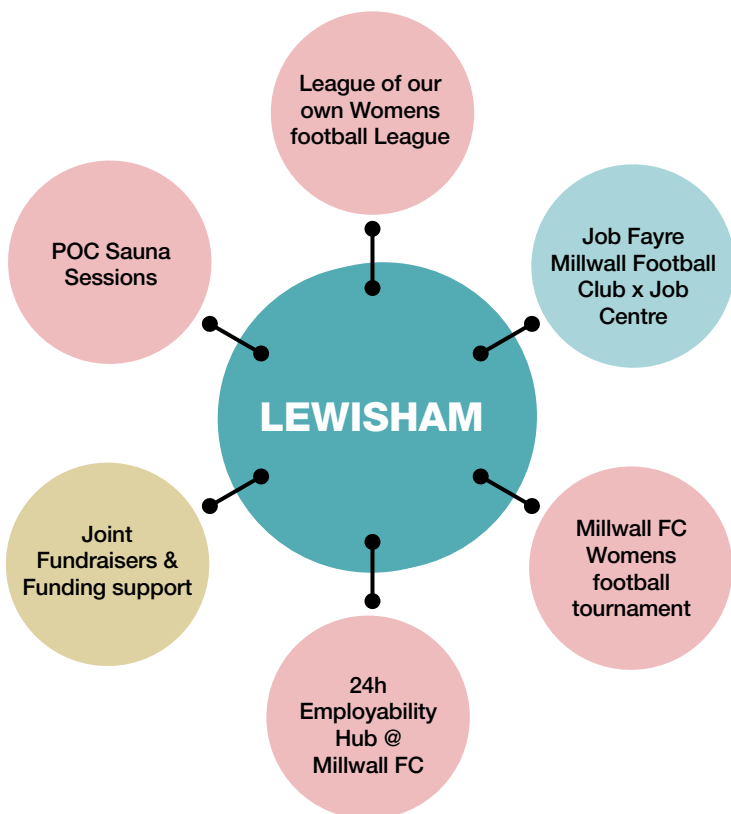


2025/6 Activities Overview

All activities are co-designed with project partners, leveraging pooled resources to address multifaceted and complex social needs

Project Partners:

- Kabaddi Scotland,
- Sporting Equals,
- Colourful Heritage Project,
- The Bowling Green,
- Scottish Police Muslim Association,
- Sports Scotland,
- Glasgow Central Mosque,
- Minority Youth Foundation



Project Partners:

- Millwall FC,
- Job Centre Lewisham,
- Community Sauna Baths – Hackney Wick,
- League of our Own Football League,
- 999,
- Dusty Knuckle,
- CnD Drinks (local Lewisham POC-owned business)
- Moonji

Festival or one-off event

Series of events or sessions

Capacity Building Support Given

2025/6 Activities Overview

All activities are co-designed with project partners, leveraging pooled resources to address multifaceted and complex social needs

Project Partners:

- Marsh Farm Outreach,
- Luton Borough Council,
- Gospel Pentecostal Church,
- The Feast Youth Project,
- Luton Street Fathers,
- Orange Picture Club,
- X-4RCE,
- Sanctuary of Self Help Me Find Me,
- The Royal Osteoporosis Society,
- Dallow + Farley Boxing Club,
- The British Mauritian,
- Orange Film Club,
- Comic Con,
- Boxing Saves Lives,
- Hope Church,
- Street Fathers,
- Faz Amnesty,
- Counterpoint Arts,
- Stepping Stones



Project Partners:

- MManchester City Council,
- LCAS,
- Creative Co-operation,
- HQ Centre,
- MIF-Aviva Studios,
- SLOGM,
- Nigerian Centre,
- Sierra Leonean community,
- Bangladeshi Heritage Women,
- Jo Cox Foundation,
- Futureworks,
- Mighty Youth,
- Better We

Festival or one-off event

Series of events or sessions

Capacity Building Support Given

2025/6

Find • Connect • Amplify
borough profiles



On the ground in Glasgow

“I’ve noticed a lot more activity online targeting community togetherness initiatives with white nationalist comments. It’s more important than ever to have real spaces for everyone to come together”

Tabassum, The Bowling Green Project, Groundswell Partner

Old racial grievances are being resurfaced

The areas Adeel works in have long been shaped by migration from India and Pakistan. This heritage is visible in the local architecture and business trade, from the gurdwaras and mosques to the diverse range of shops serving the community. Historically, Scottish and Scottish South Asian communities have shared nationalist sympathies. Scotland has considered itself the exception in Britain in this respect, but it feels that this is shifting. Pollockshields is increasingly appearing as an alighting point for far-right anti-migration activity online. This has been translated to real life this year and the community are feeling vulnerable. The Bowling Green Project, located in the heart of Pollockshields, is run by Tabassum, who set up this multi-community use wellbeing space at the location where Kriss Donald, victim of racially aggravated gang violence, was abducted in 2004.



Online hate actors are targeting community togetherness initiatives

A partner of Groundswell, she runs events through the year to build solidarity and undermine divisive narratives. But the area has become a focus for online far right activity who threaten to use the death of Kriss Donald to motivate action.

Tabassum receives regular comments on her social media accusing her of using the space to replace white culture, to which she often responds with invitations to come and see that this is not the case. Some people do come and are surprised by the reality, but it is nonetheless frightening for the Bowling Green Project, which is a small, low budget project that does very much with very little.

Communities have decreasing trust in the police and large institutions to protect them

On an adjacent shopping street, Rangers fans marched through earlier in the year and attacked an Islamic shop with the shopkeeper inside. Community members felt that the police didn't act fast enough to protect them. At the same time, police have been cracking down on anti-social behaviour in the area with a focus on youths setting off fireworks. South Asian young people feel they are unfairly targeted by a police force that doesn't understand them, and there is low trust in local policing. There is also some frustration with local South Asian organisations like the mosques and gurdwaras who are looking to use their spaces to bring people together. Many remained silent on the attack in fear that speaking up might impact their funding or wider political support.

Tabassum felt she, as leader of a small low budget organisation, could act because she had little to lose. So she held an event to remind locals that we are all one. Adeel has supported multi-community food sharing events through the year at the Bowling Green, including small funding initiatives and getting the word out. Small organisations are sometimes more free to be agile, at the same time as being more vulnerable to losing their space. He is also working closely with the Scottish Muslim Police Association to provide events that advocate for minority communities and their needs in an atmosphere of heightening tensions.

Case Study Kabaddi Scotland

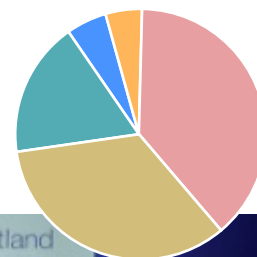
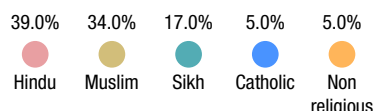
“Adeel brought us the idea of Kabaddi Scotland, we trusted him and offered our hall for training sessions. Now you can see how much the young people have come out of their shells and developed. It helps the mosque to build great partnerships and connect our community with other people so they all have more opportunities”

Glasgow Central Mosque youth club

Connecting Kabaddi Scotland with youth groups, migrant support and a disused mosque hall has helped it to become a mentoring space and a national voice for minority ethnic communities in sport.

Kabaddi Scotland has been able to see significant growth and cultural influence with the support of their Groundswell Community Connector. The sport, originating in India, has been running in Glasgow since 2011. Adeel was engaged three years ago when sign-ups were stagnating and training space was hard to find. He was able to connect the founder and coach (Prem and Skip) with youth groups who needed a sporting outlet across the city. He helped them to move into the unused Central Mosque community hall. Kabaddi now engages the mosque boys (and soon girls) youth club as well as the professional men’s team from the Central Mosque location.

Participants by faith group



The pipeline of players from many faith and ethnic communities has strengthened the competitive team who have won their past three tournaments including the World Cup last year. The strengthened position of the team in turn helped it to establish its governing body. The body holds significant cultural influence as the only ethnic minority-led sports organisation in Scotland. The body has been able to host its own Race and Racism in Sports conference with Sport Scotland, leading the conversation on inclusion across all sports and reframing the conversation around inclusion. The impact for those involved in the sport is that they have a space to grow and develop and can advocate for the social inclusion they need from a place of soft cultural power. Winning at international level increases local pride and comes with international recognition. Next year, Glasgow is hosting the Commonwealth Games where Kabaddi Scotland will compete. The Scottish team now attracts players from all over the UK and the body is developing a UK league and a women’s team.

“ Listening to all the practitioners has helped me to see the issue in a way I’d never thought about”

Journalist, Racism in Sport Conference.



On the ground in Lewisham

“The people of colour sauna sessions are perfect, I’m so grateful for a space where I can find that cultural safety and connection with other people. I would like to see more and perhaps some more structured conversations or reflections”

Anthony, Dusty Knuckle, Groundswell Partner

Deprivation and gentrification live side by side

The area covered by Sokhara is one of the most diverse boroughs in London, ethnically and by its representation of LGBTQ+ communities. There is a mixed community of commuters and people born in Lewisham, with the latter increasingly feeling the impact of the cost of living crisis twinned with the ongoing threat of gentrification. Lewisham has amongst the lowest educational attainment of the London boroughs with rising rates of unemployment. Housing can be precarious and the premature mortality rate is the highest in London.

Data Source: <https://trustforlondon.org.uk/data/boroughs/lewisham-poverty-and-inequality-indicators/>

Scarcity of community support is making people hold on tighter to what they have

Lewisham Council is struggling with budget constraints and feels out of reach to most locals looking for help. Food banks have struggled to meet the local need and many have closed down. The same is true for community outreach initiatives. As scarcity increases, partners notice that the population is becoming more individualistic with people holding on to what little they have and isolating themselves. Sokhara has tried to counteract this by finding funding with the initiatives, like the POC (people of colour) sauna takeover with Hackney Wick Community Sauna Baths who, with Groundswell support, collaborated with Dusty Knuckle, CnD Drinks (local Lewisham POC-owned business) and Moonji to create part funded spaces which sold out to 100+ attendees.

Gender inclusivity is under a twin threat

Community spaces that historically provided space for women and those that have historically provided space for trans people have both been affected through a mixture of community centre closures and DEI policy changes by private venues. For the former, lack of community funding has been the core culprit. Whilst for the latter, it has been an increasing acceptance of exclusive sports practice. As the permissibility of sexism seems to be increasing in public discourse, this is an area Sokhara will be continuing to monitor.



Image Credit : CC Morgan

Collaborations across wealth groups have had greatest impact

Sokhara’s partnerships include local businesses and she uses community organising techniques that allow her to bring together people from all walks of life (and wealth brackets) to support a common cause. This has been true for her Job Fairs and new Employability Hub where Millwall FC have partnered with the Job Centre to fund and host an initiative that now reaches thousands of NEETs in the local area. It is also true for the inclusion in football initiatives, where she has convened the people impacted by pitch closures to women and trans people with local businesses and community groups to raise private funds for the shared need of sporting space.



Lewisham Case Study A League Of Our Own

“I think now more than ever, it’s important to have a league like this, because there’s such a divide and so much misinformation going around about trans women in sports that it’s affecting the grassroots level, where it’s just people who grew up playing football”

Sokhara, Community Connector

At a time where safe spaces for trans football players are under threat, Groundswell has been able to support the growth of an inclusive league for South London by connecting them to business funding and inclusive changing rooms.

Sokhara has been able to draw together business partners and grassroots groups to help the first trans-inclusive women’s football league in South London to scale up.

From July 2025, the FA banned trans women from FA-affiliated football club changing rooms. In response, ‘A League of Our Own’ was seeded by Joanna Holmgren and Josie Gray. Non-affiliated with the FA, it can provide safe, inclusive playing spaces and changing rooms for trans-inclusive teams.

The founders were put in touch with Sokhara by a yoga teacher who had followed Groundswell’s 2024 campaign to improve pitch hire in the area to include queer teams. Sokhara had made representations to the FA on the topic at the time of the campaign.

The league kicked off with a pitch booking at a local school playing field and a single sponsor. Sokhara got involved at the time of their official launch and fundraising event where she was able to galvanise local businesses in her network to attend and to sponsor the team’s ongoing activities, so they have a diversified funding base. She spoke on the panel about the importance of the league which the founders say gave them some gravitas.

There is high demand for places in the league. There are currently six teams with a waiting list of 30. Sokhara has been able to negotiate ongoing pitch rental at her partner Millwall’s training ground every Saturday from February 2026 with the required unisex facilities for changing. Together they have been able to obtain additional funding for the league from Millwall. This means the league will be able to expand their reach and have the financial headroom to develop their activities.

“The challenge we had was finding the pitch base that was not too expensive and finding the funding and sponsors”

The next challenge for the league will be to identify more volunteers to help them to develop and expand the league.



Image Credit: @dimoshtutter



On the ground in Luton

“A lot of organisations do things in isolation but when you work together you bring your audiences together and they have even more to do and more ways to meet people”

Wayde, X-4RCE, Groundswell partner

Luton communities feel some level of resilience to direct hate speech because of the spotlight on them

Lutonians have a real sense that the national spotlight is on them because of the history of hate preachers associated with the town. This means that groups and organisations have emerged to bring communities together and that the local population are to some level educated and aware of the dangers of extremism. When the 2024 summer riots happened, residents from across wealth and ethnic groups came together to create a space to talk. “Let’s Talk” sessions have been supported by Groundswell Project ever since with continued interest.

The ongoing cost of living crisis is creating vulnerabilities to online hatred through isolation and social media dependence

Other social harms haven’t missed the town and the cost of living crisis, male loneliness epidemic, and increase in domestic violence combined with a lack of inclusive spaces (most notably for refugees and boys joining gangs) are a constant challenge to the public will for a cohesive community. Residents attending Groundswell-connected events report feeling a struggle between having enough money to do things they enjoy and meeting new people and the alternative of spending their spare time alone at home on a phone consuming content that can make them feel anxious. One of the challenges for organisations is to create events that continue through the year, and that are not just a one-off.

Free to access cultural forums are creating resilience against online influences and have the ability to establish sustainable relationships

Strategic city-wide partnerships have integrated community and cultural services, driving a significant increase in free, inclusive events that attract a broader and more diverse audience. The Peace Out Festival had the impact of making organisations aware of each other and developing partnership work. The Orange Film Club, Street Fathers, X-4RCE and Knock Out Minds have collaborated on a range of different initiatives for a Refugee Week festival, to create Luton Comic Con+, for boxing with peer mentoring and games nights. The events have brought together established and newly arrived communities, different men’s groups and young people.

Images: Below, Middle and Bottom right: Luton Comic Con, Heroes against Hatelmage Bottom left: Peace Out festival



Luton Case Study Knock Out Minds

“Yesterday, one of the guys on the WhatsApp messaged to say it’s his birthday and he had nothing to do. So we took him out to the pub. There were 15 of us in the end”

Participant

Connecting boxing with peer support networks has both created a sports outlet for men impacted by isolation in the cost of living crisis and generated a network of men who support each other.

Leela has connected peer networking, sports and an under-used community space to build a sustainable support network for men in Luton.

Boxing Saves Lives usually work with young people in schools. X-4RCE host peer networking events for vulnerable men. The HOPE church hall hosts events for people in the community through the year including support for vulnerable men through a series of programmes.

Leela had identified the need for men to have places they can take part in sport affordably. She supported the three organisations to pool their resources and get funding to run a weekly boxing class for men at HOPE church hall. The format allows men attending to talk first then box together.

The boxing-centred approach expanded the reach of all the organisations taking part. It brought vulnerable men and less vulnerable men together. Those men set up a Whatsapp group and continue to support each other there.

Participants reported feeling they have more to do because they are aware of events run by all three organisations. Additionally, some participants run local initiatives themselves, including the Orange Film Club and Street Fathers (street patrols to support young men). Those people are able to share even more free events to the men on the WhatsApp group. Participants reported that they wouldn’t be able to afford activities like this without the initiatives.

They are aware that they need spaces to talk and appreciate the sports-based format. Men also reported that the alternative to spaces like this would be for them to be isolated at home.

“I have two jobs and I still don’t make enough money for sports clubs. These sessions give me somewhere to do what I love and not be at home where I would just be stuck looking at toxic things online.

“I would say I am less vulnerable compared to some here but I find that mix helps us support the other lads.”

Participant



On the ground in Manchester

“When you share your resources, you are more interesting to funders. In the cost of living crisis that has been really important. Partnerships have helped us be responsive in the face of challenge”

Angela, Community Connector

The social consequences of online misogyny continue to impact young people and educators

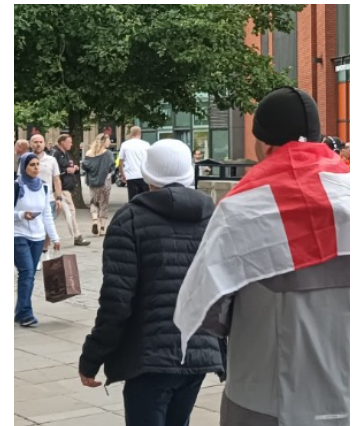
Youth practitioners across Manchester are increasingly concerned about the real-world consequences of misogynistic narratives circulating online. Data associated with programmes from Futureworks highlights the prevalence of trolling and gender-based hostility experienced by young people in digital spaces.

Through work with schools and youth groups, Angela observes that these online attitudes are increasingly reproduced in everyday interactions. Narratives rooted in performative masculinity and hostility toward women influence peer relationships and perceptions of authority. For youth workers, the challenge has therefore shifted from moderating online behaviour to addressing cultural attitudes that move between digital and physical spaces. Interventions increasingly combine media literacy, facilitated dialogue and creative youth activity designed to challenge harmful narratives early.

Alliances to rebuild democratic participation and civic trust are developing in the face of continued challenge

Community organisations also report declining confidence in democratic institutions, often reinforced by polarising narratives circulating online. In response, Manchester partners are experimenting with collaborative civic initiatives aimed at rebuilding participation from the grassroots.

Recent programmes have connected universities, youth organisations and civil society groups through initiatives such as “Take Part – Democracy for All,” youth activities led by Mighty Youth Organisation, and peace-building work with the Jo Cox Foundation.



Images: Top Left
Crowning Culture Creative Youth Project celebrates black female identity

Top Right protest in the city

Bottom Right
Groundswell team share our model with Mayor of Manchester, Andy Burnham



A recent gathering at the People’s History Museum brought community leaders together to share resources and strengthen networks through partnerships linked to More in Common.

However, practical barriers persist. Community centres face rising rents and utility costs, funding opportunities remain limited, and youth engagement is increasingly difficult to sustain over the duration of projects. As a result, organisations are exploring partnerships with local businesses to create skills pathways, volunteering opportunities and stronger links between civic institutions and neighbourhood communities.

Manchester Case Study Longsight Festival

“We had only just set up and were invited to the Groundswell festival. It was great for us because we got to connect with other organisations and now we’re about to start working in schools with one of them”

Groundswell partner

Festivals are part of the Groundswell programme in each region. They are a force for connecting organisations who hold shared objectives, increasing community confidence and making residents aware of activities they can take part in.



The Longsight Festival began with a suggestion from residents during a meeting at Longsight Community Art Space: “Wouldn’t it be good to do a festival for Longsight?” Since then, the festival has grown into an important expression of neighbourhood identity. The Groundswell Project has brought together stallholders, volunteers and artists with additional funding. Manchester City Council supports the festival each year.

Culture is a means to bring people together and Longsight is widely recognised as an area of multiple forms of deprivation where residents rarely attend arts activities due to cost or distance. The most recent event attracted **an estimated 2,500 – 3,000 attendees** and included **35 community stalls**, performances and creative workshops.

Demand consistently exceeded expectations. Some stallholders prepared materials for **around 60 participants**, only to run out within the **first hour**, while a tote-bag workshop distributed **250 bags in three hours**. For many residents, the festival provides rare access to cultural activity close to home.

“There are very few places of entertainment in Longsight... there aren’t cafés or ‘third spaces’ where people can gather” - LCAS organiser Saman.

The festival increased community confidence following far right hostility. Longsight is one of Manchester’s most diverse neighbourhoods, home to Bengali, Somali, Afro-Caribbean and other South Asian communities. The festival was designed to reflect this diversity and create shared spaces where residents could connect.

The programme combined performances with informal gathering

spaces—tea areas for older residents, craft workshops for women, and open stages where children joined in dancing and music. Following periods of tension in the city, residents said the festival helped restore confidence:

“People were feeling very scared before the festival, but when everyone came out together it created a sense of safety.”

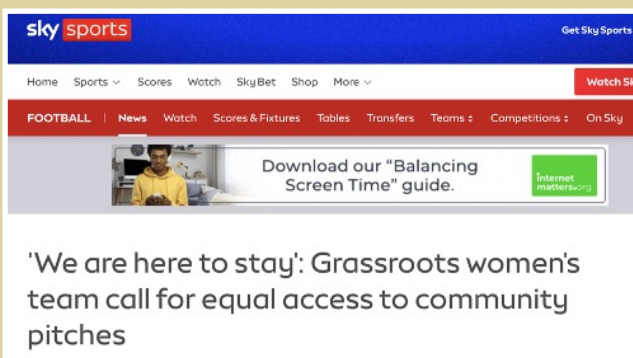
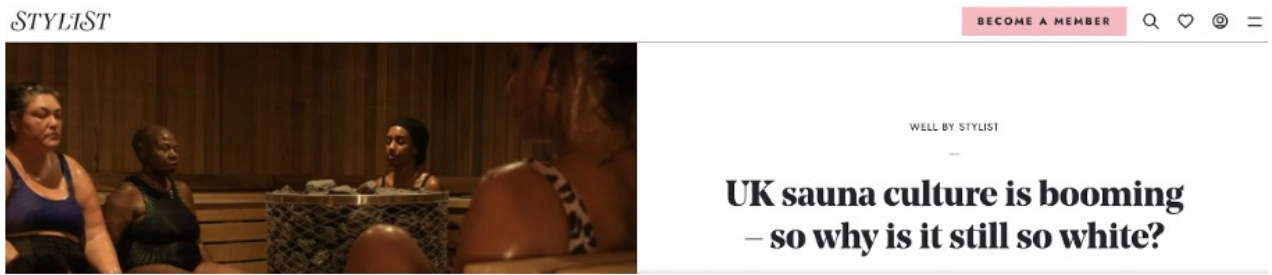
A defining feature of the festival is that it is shaped by residents themselves. The original idea emerged from a community meeting, and planning continues through consultation with local groups and volunteers.

“Most of the things we do are fed into us by residents. Our role is to amplify their voices.”

Residents run stalls, volunteer and contribute ideas for programming. Organisers now plan to expand the festival to a three-day programme, reflecting its growing popularity and community support. As Saman reflects:

“For us to give Longsight one festival each year is a small step — but it helps make sure residents feel connected and happy.”

Groundswell - connected projects in the media



Challenges and learnings



Challenges ...



1. Racial grievances resurface whilst institutional trust decreases

In Pollockshields and Longsight, community solidarity is under strain as bad-faith actors amplify racial grievances online and mobilise them locally. Community initiatives have faced intimidation and misinformation. At the same time, perceived slow responses to racially motivated incidents, fewer opportunities for civic engagement and disproportionate enforcement affecting minority youth have contributed to declining trust in public institutions.

Learning: Communities need forums to organise, the time to participate and confidence that engagement can lead to action. Connectors have convened spaces where residents and institutions can engage, while partnerships with local media and minority police associations have strengthened collective responses. In some cases, volunteers have been funded to support community work.

However, smaller, trusted community forums who are offering diverse and responsive micro- project work, like The Bowling Green Project in Pollockshields, are struggling to access micro-funding pots needed to respond to changing landscapes.

2. Online misogyny continues to impact women and girls' experience in the digital world and in real life

As in previous reports, Community Connectors report the growing impact of misogynistic narratives online on young people. Women and girls—often also targeted because of race or religion—experience harassment both online and offline, while boys and young men encounter polarising narratives that exploit uncertainty around identity, belonging and relationships.

Learning: Community Connectors are engaging advisory groups to inform broader multi-stakeholder responses to misogyny. They are also working with partners to integrate conversations about misogyny into cultural and sports activities with young men and women, allowing issues such as relationships and identity to be explored through mentorship.

And to develop creative responses that allow female narratives to reclaim space online and in real life. Interventions addressing more serious harms, including misogynistic abuse in gaming communities and domestic violence, are now being developed with partners in consultation with residents and young people.



... and learnings



3. Deepened engagement in local forums is increasing the reach of Groundswell connections

Community Connectors have historically struggled to engage statutory organisations. In the last year they have addressed this through deepened participation in safeguarding forums, neighbourhood partnerships and advisory boards.

In Luton, Leela contributes to the Women's Safety Forum and neighbourhood partnership board. In Scotland, Adeel has used Sport Scotland membership to influence policy conversations on inclusion. In Lewisham, Sokhara sits on the Safer Neighbourhood Board and Hate Crime Working Group. In Manchester, Angela is part of the Futureworks Independent Advisory Group, helping shape pathways into higher education and creative industries for young people from low-income households. She also contributes to Jo Cox Foundation consultation in the city.

Learning: Stronger relationships with statutory partners through forums are increasing recognition of connector-led engagement with residents and community organisations. Participation has expanded their influence on responses to online misogyny, women's safety, inclusion and youth opportunity.

This has enabled community insight to inform higher-level collaborations like a planned **Futureworks** and **Women in Games** online intervention student collaboration.

4. Socioeconomic pressures continue to intensify exposure to online harms so community investment is increasingly important

Cost-of-living pressures, service cuts and reduced access to affordable community spaces continue to increase isolation in many neighbourhoods. With many residents working multiple jobs and having limited time or income for community participation, conditions on the ground leave people more exposed to isolation and online harms. Greater reliance on digital spaces can increase exposure to harmful narratives, while scarcity of facilities heightens competition for space and opportunity.

Learning: Sustained, accessible programming rooted in shared physical spaces helps rebuild connection and resilience. Community sports, cultural initiatives and peer networks create regular opportunities for interaction across backgrounds, while partnerships with local organisations and businesses help unlock facilities and expand participation.

While the government's cohesion action plan signals support for hyperlocal work, reductions in local funding raise concerns about growing vulnerability to online narratives as communities face increasing pressure on time and resources.



How connected partners change communities



Groundswell partners address division by collectively responding to community needs using shared resources to reach more people and amplify alternatives to hate

Here are five reasons it works:

1. Connection is capacity

By mapping existing grassroots initiatives, linking practitioners across sectors, and facilitating collaboration between community organisations, statutory bodies, and businesses, Groundswell Community Connectors surface local expertise, pool knowledge and resources (like unused space, sponsored funding, and peer support to access partnered grants) and collective capacity. Co-ordination rather than operating in isolation, allows organisations to provide for the needs that government bodies are increasingly struggling to support like food banks and access to career opportunities for young people.

2. Addressing vulnerability reduces susceptibility

Groundswell's model recognises that extremist narratives gain traction where underlying vulnerabilities go unaddressed. Rather than focusing solely on ideological rebuttal, Community Connectors and their partners identify and respond to drivers such as poverty, isolation, fear, misinformation, and a lack of representation. By strengthening protective factors within communities - confidence, connection, and access to support - communities gain longer-term resilience to voices who exploit them with divisive narratives.

3. Building empathy is a preventative action

Groundswell prioritises empathy as a foundational mechanism for change. By creating structured yet open environments for sport, support, dialogue and local pride, individuals from diverse backgrounds can develop their social support structures across wealth, health, gendered and ethnic boundaries. This reduces the social fragmentation that often precedes polarisation. By working with trusted local institutions and community actors, Groundswell supports environments where people can meet beyond digital echo chambers.

4. Resilient communities are responsive communities

A networked, relationship-driven model allows partners on the ground to respond quickly to emerging tensions, misinformation, or local flashpoints. Trust and communication channels are established in advance, and communities are better positioned to mobilise early interventions before issues escalate. Groundswell was able to mobilise immediately in each of the four areas when the 2024 riots hit and our connectors are consistently looking ahead to threats they hear about on the ground, responding with planning partnered activities to build resilience against them.

5. Amplifying our work strengthens our voice

Partnered projects achieve impact through dual channels: first, by providing local and national decision-makers with direct insights into resident-led approaches; and second, through a strategic media presence that counters hate speech and harmful narratives with stories of community pride. The model enables Groundswell partners to inform policy actors about effective community responses to harm, while co-ordinated media and social amplification inspires hope, social action, and pride in place.

Thank you Groundswell Partners



To the organisations, businesses and statutory organisations who have connected to respond to the needs of communities in a challenging era

Thank you!

If you are listed here you have advised, organised and facilitated ways to bring people together, create new opportunities, address harassment and bullying, teach how hate exploits, and replace it with sport, support, mentorship, space to chill out, create, eat, grow and make friends.

FazAmnesty	HMPS Brixton	Inspire FM	Flare	Music Broth	Ex-Girlfriends FC
Co-op Community Engagement	Bank Of England	Beds VERU	Innerspace	Bridging the Gap Project	East London Ladies (East)
Fun Palaces	City of Sanctuary UK	The Joe Cox Foundation	Al Meezan	Govanhill Housing Association	Girls R Us
Don't Be SAD	Fighting Forward CIC	Hope Church	Clarkston Mosque, Masjid Yusuf	Govanhill Community Development Trust	Metropolitan Police Lewisham
The British Mauritian	Glasgow Life	Healthwatch Luton	GUMSA	Radio Awaz	Lewisham College
Dallow + Farley Boxing Club	Unique Sisters of Manchester	IMIX	Holyrood Secondary School	Commission for Race Equality and Rights (CRER)	999 Club
The Royal Osteoporosis Society	Hulme, Moss Side & Rusholme Neighbourhood Health Partnership - Mcr Local Care Org	X-4RCE	St Albert's Primary	South East Integration Network	Action for Comunity Development
Luton Today	ZIWO Women's Group	CDMA Academy	Alcohol & Drug Partnership (ADP)	The Daisy Project	Turnham Academy (Ian Wright School)
Citizen's Advice Luton	GM Stystem Changers	Luton Rising	Glasgow Poverty Project	Interfaith Glasgow	Melanin Health & Wellness
Community Connex	DIPACT	Macfest	Al Farooq Education Centre	Pollokshields Development Agency	SE LDN Mind
Caraline	The little yak	Somali Voices Enabled	Scottish Police Muslim Association	Police Scotland	Woolwich Weightlifting
MHCLG	Pride in Wellness	Africana Media Enterprise (AME)	Colourful Heritage Project	Hidden Garden	Creating Ground
Veteran's Community Network	LBTQWomen	Craft & Design Centre - Orange Picture Club	WSREC	Ton of Brix	Blackheath Dads
Centre for Domestic Abuse	Freedom Fridays	Mary Seacole	Active Life Club	Team You	Project 17 (East)
Luton Urban Radio	Brass	Leading Luton	Minorities Youth Foundation	Metropolitan Police Peckham	Lewisham Toy Library
Help Me Find Me	Red Cross Luton	The Young Foundation	East Renfrewshire Carers	Old Nuns Head	Lewisham Carers Hub
Mental Health + Me	The Roma Trust	Luton Black Health Equity Steering Group	Hurlet House	Power 2 Prevail	Lewisham Healthy Walks
The Ghana Society	Luton Irish Forum	Whitworth Art Gallery	Glasgow Homeschoolers	London FA	Catford Pride
Sanctuary of Self	FUTUREWORKS UNIVERSITY (UCLAN)	Ashraf Habimana Foundation	The Tapeletters Project	South London Laces FC	Bellingham Green Playground Action Group
Ramsay's Wings n Tings	Digigem	Luton Comic Con	The Bowling Green	Enjoy FC	Havin' A Bubble
Longsight Community Art Space	Rekindle	TAKE PART Network	Bellahouston Secondary	Sports Direct Lewisham	Maple Road Market
League of our own	Glasgow Central Mosque	Crowning Culture Project CIC	Urban Community Project	POC Patrol	Empowr CIC
Government Events	Luton Libraries	Intersectionality Women's Programmes CIC	Big Bro Soccer League	SE London Pride	Action for Community Development
Two Side Studios	TG Consultancy	Vaniya Arts	Kabaddi League	The Other Team	Jobcentre Peckham
Better We CIC	Over 50's Black Men Forum	Prevent Scotland	Scottish Government Safeguarding & Vunerbility Team	Tree Shepherd	IKEA Greenwich
Super Soccer	CSB	Glasgow Womens library	Glasgow Planning Partnership	LMRN	AMCK Dance
Woodfarm Education Centre	Mearns Castle High School	Luton Street Fathers	Amina Muslim Womens Resource Centre	Petit Village	Legendary Community Club
BLCF	Manchester City Council	Mazzy Dee's Empowerment Network	Glasgow Gurdwara	Badger Badger	Downward Monkey
Refuweege	Church of God of Prophecy	The Feast Youth Project		Fatherhood	Tobetterdays
Stepping Stones	Wingman Mentors	Kabaddi Scotland		Lil Nans Bar	Kaths Place
Denbigh High School				Fruuttii London	

Thank you Groundswell Partners



David Steer	CIC	Regeneration CIC - Longsight	FurtureWorks University (UCLan)	Luton Borough Council (family hubs and food first map)	Several Seats CIC
Kindred Yoga	Moss Side & Hulme Development Trust	Radio Diamond	Friends of Crowcroft Park - Neighbourhood Group	Women's Aid in Luton	Boxing Saves Lives
Corner Cafe	Longsight Boys Club - Amal Rusholme & Longsight	Radio Africana	De Butterfly CIC	Community Breakfast Club	Marsh Farm Outreach
Heading the Rite Directions	Bangladeshi Women's Group	PREVENT MCR - City Council	Cultural Fusion Studios	Talk Club	Big Hat Factory Community Choir
SLAM (NHS)	Yellowbird CIC	PeaceMeal Manchester	COMED UK Supplementary School	Gospel Pentecostal Church	British African Caribbean Cultural Association (BACCA)
Lewisham Irish Centre	422 Community Hub	Moss Side Millennium Powerhouse	Chrysalis Family Centre	Legacy of Windrush Descendants (LOWR)	Go Dharmic
Community Connectors	Wonderfully Made Women - ALL FM Radio	Mood Radio Online & Protech Studio	CHIC (Chinese Health Information Centre)	Crimebeat	Changing Lives Forever
Lewisham Unity	Work for Smile Charity - Longsight	Nigerian Community Greater Manchester	CDM UK (Creative Design & Manufacture) M/cr	Hatters PCN	Farley Hill Methodist Church
Fox and Firkin Pub	Women's Voices Group - Longsight	Nigerian Street Food - HQ Fallowfield	CEE BEE GOLD Charity	Connect Futures	Food Cycle Luton
Catbytes	WISSC - Westwood Str - Caribbean Moss Side	NIA Moss Collective - Moss Side	Carmoor Road Community Centre - Longsight WIOCC	Population Wellbeing at Luton Borough Council	Blessed Is Our Hands
Rough and Ready Cafe	West Indian Organisations Co-ordinating Committee	New Testament Church - Longsight	Cameroon Asscoiation MCR - Haut Nkam	Kick It Out	Food First Luton
DAGE	Windrush Millennium Centre Moss Side	NESTAC Charity MCR	Community Arts Northwest	University of Bedfordshire (Outreach Team)	Luton Foodbank
Beleve	Widows Empowerment Trust	MTTC - Mission In The City	Caribbean African Health Network	Shin Rai Martial Arts	Headway
Chris Cumberbatch	We Stand Together	MGTY CIC - Ardwick	Neighbourhood Teams & NHS Local Care Org R-MS-H	Link Community Centre	ResoLUTIONs
More Yoga	Waistbeads by Nora	MFAM CIC Moss-Side	Brunswick Community Group - Brunswick Church	Luton Town FC	Signposts
Build Up Foundation	WAST - Women Seeking Asylum Together	Manchester Sudenese Tree Development Community (MSTDC) - Ardwick	BME Network	Luton City of Sanctuary	NOAH (New Opportunities and Horizons)
GLL - Crystal Palace	VIBE Studios	Malawi Heritage UK	Bollyfit Active UK CIC	Luton, Hertfordshire & Milton Keynes Urgent Care	IMPAKT Housing
Downham Centre	Youth Elements - Longsight	MACC MCR Community Central - MCC	B2Work Group	Youth Partnership Service	Squared
Fouzia	Untold Orchestra Muisc & Arts	LITD - Light In The Darkness - Harperhey	Be The Difference - Fundraising for Charity Orgs	Total Wellbeing Luton	Walk To Freedom Foundation
Ladywell Unit	UNITY Radio - DAB/FM/ Online	Legacy Radio - FM 90.1 - Hulme	AV - Spirit Physical Well-being Activities	LBC Social Justice Unit	Revolution
Crystal Palace Foundation	The Settllment Community Centre - Openshaw	Kick It Out - Anti-Racism Campaigns	Ardwick & Longsight Neighbourhood Group	ELFT Mental Health Team	YouTurn
Lewisham Youth	TV49 News & Media	Kingsway Athletic FC CIC	ANNAS IT & Web Solutions - Moss Side	Merge XR	Centre For Youth & Community Development
Eco Order	The Salam Project - Longsight	Kath Locke Centre & Big Life Group	Amani Centre - Hideaway Youth Centre - Moss Side	Att10tive	LC Fitness
Commando Temple	The River Manchester	Jet Black Dance Academy	Ahmed Iqbal Ullah - Race Relations Centre	Mind BLMK	The Raise Up Foundation
Rainbow Boroughs	The Open Kitchen Longsight	GroundZero One CIC	ALL FM Radio	Empowering Education	The Trauma Healing Collective
Queer Off	The HQ - Moss Side	Interfaith Network for MCR	Age Friendly Hulme & Moss Side Neighbourhood Partnership	Tokko Space	FACES
Bank of Things	Tanzanian Association MCR	Hong Kongese - Christian Fellowship	Afrocats	Recovery College Bedfordshire	Azelea's
Feed The Hill	Sierra Leone SL Health Group	Great Angels Foundation Charity	ACTIVE Youth Zone	Love Music, Hate Racism	Luton All Women's Centre
GLL - Glassmill	Sierra Leone Organisation of Greater Manchester (SLOGM)	Globe Community Centre	ACROSS UMHRAH Charity - Gorton	Spider Runners	
U-Turn	SER - Socio-Economic	Ghana Union of Greater MCR (GUGM)		Equality PCN	
Chinwag Cafe		Elevate Young Minds		St Andrew's Church	
Millwall Community Trust				Luton Borough Council	
Consult for Solutions				Biscot Peace & Wellbeing Hub	
Amazin' Business Solutions				St Francis Church	
Utility Warehouse				ESOL College Luton	
The Circle Group CIC				Pride in Luton	
Dr Bola - Change Agent Network - SEN Support				The Ebonista Project	
BE WELL - Fundraiser Charity Resource - Trafford					
Urhobo Community Group - NCGM					
Barbadian Society MCR					
Grenadan Society MCR					
Kenyan Woman's Group					



**GROUNDWELL
PROJECT**

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2025/6 Impact Report

