

# Third Age Project

The Charity of Sir Richard Whittington  
Older People & Housing Programme

## Keeping older people fit and well and reducing isolation in Camden

The **Third Age Project** (TAP) is based in Camden and was established in January 1997 to meet the needs of the older population living locally.

TAP deliver a range of activities aimed at keeping older people fit and well and reducing social isolation.

Funding has helped TAP to deliver a new holistic programme based on the Five Ways to Wellbeing.

*'We are like a family' we come from different backgrounds. But we never feel that...we feel we are all the same.' Member*



## Why the work is needed

Mental health needs in this area are the third highest in London. Lifespans are 10 years shorter on average than other areas of London due to more long-term conditions such as diabetes and heart disease. Thirty-four percent of the population come from a Black or Minority Ethnic background which research suggests can be associated with poorer health outcomes and greater difficulty in accessing statutory services.

In addition, extensive delays waiting for NHS treatment has reduced mobility for the older population and low general wellbeing has been identified as a result.

## Approach

TAP deliver a programme of 30 healthy living, community learning, social and cultural activities and specialist support groups each week. TAP also collaborate on joint campaigns and initiatives. Services are delivered in partnership with a network of 18 organisations.

### Tailored approach:

- Health information sessions (e.g. incontinence, managing diabetes, Winter self-care).
- Talks from a solicitor about legal issues such as wills.
- Outreach and therapy – building relationships.
- Support to access mainstream services.
- Activities such as art classes, choir, memory café, exercise groups, and trips.

### User involvement:

TAP encourages members to volunteer in some way, for example, providing friendship, or sharing their passions and interests to teach others.

TAP has recruited, trained and supported 54 volunteers to its buddying and befriending schemes.

# Impact



**Growing Reach:** During 2022/23, 469 older people (82% from Black and Minority Ethnic backgrounds) took part in 1506 sessions and 37 different activities as part of the Five Ways to Wellbeing programme.



**Health outcomes:** Members have reported that their involvement in activities has helped improve their physical and mental health and well-being. They variously reported feeling physically fitter, less anxious, more confident, or more able to relax.



**Social connection:** Members, staff and volunteers all described the value of feeling included in the TAP community



**Research and learning:** TAP has contributed to several research projects, e.g. The Apple Tree Study to trial a 10-week activity programme aimed at reducing the risk of dementia.

*“Lots of people in my class come to me, saying how much it has saved them through depression...I love coming here to teach...it doesn't feel like work. It feels like fun!” Worker*



## Challenges

TAP operates in an area of diverse need and there are ongoing challenges:

Almost half the members lack confidence in spoken English and finding ways to engage some sections of the community remains a challenge – e.g. older men, minority groups.

The cost of living and food poverty continues to impact Members.

Members struggle to engage with online services due to a lack of devices, or necessary digital skills.

## Learnings

- TAP has identified that involving older people in service delivery is essential.
- Since its launch in April 2022, the Five Ways to Wellbeing initiative has been adapted to better meet members' needs, with a greater focus on mindfulness and relaxation.

*“Recognising our biggest single resource is older people themselves and that everyone's got something to offer” Worker*

## The Future

- TAP will explore the potential for corporate partnerships to support future funding requirements.
- Plan to develop the Third Age Ambassador's scheme.
- Improving monitoring and evaluation systems.
- Focus on targeting and recruiting younger volunteers and developing intergenerational work with schools.