



**BRENT  
HUBS**

# Context

- Brent is the fourth most deprived borough in London
- The gross weekly earnings in Brent is 13% lower than the London average (£583)
- There were 7,900 workless household in the borough in 2019 (8.6% of the labour force) and 20,550 residents were UC claimants
- During the period most effected by the pandemic Brent had the second highest number of furloughed staff in London
- Brent Council recognized that earlier interventions targeted at those most in need resulted in better outcomes. The impact of doing things differently would not only benefits residents but also allows for a more effective use of public resources

# Background

- The Brent Hubs programme came about as a result of Outcome Based Review in 2016 to come up with different ways of working in order to deliver improved services to Brent Residents
- The research highlighted:
  - The importance of attending first to people's most pressing problems;
  - The difficulty some individuals and professionals face in navigating the system, knowing which organisations to connect with or refer to;
  - People's experience and frustration of having to tell their story several times to different people/organisations;
  - The need for collaboration across agencies to provide a more holistic approach to services;
- A new way of working was developed offering an opportunity to bring organisations together to work in a different way and provide a place to better connect with the community
- Programme was piloted in Harlesden Library was given green light to be rolled out Autumn 2019
- Brent Hubs would be placed in line with Brent Connect Areas Harlesden, Kilburn, Willesden, Wembley and Kingsbury

# OBR Focus

Established three OBRs following a **design methodology**: Housing Vulnerable People, Employment Support & Welfare Reform and Regeneration, focusing on:

What are the specific **issues and challenges** for people around participation in work and/or retaining tenancy during periods of vulnerability?

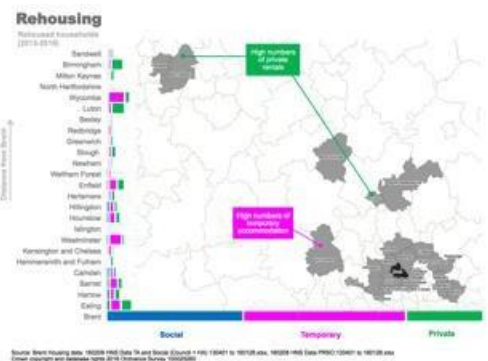
What might **support and enable** vulnerable people to participate more fully in work and/or to find accommodation that meets their needs?

What is people's experience of trying to **access advice and support** to help them find and secure work and/or accommodation? What are the issues and problems? What important things are services missing and not addressing?

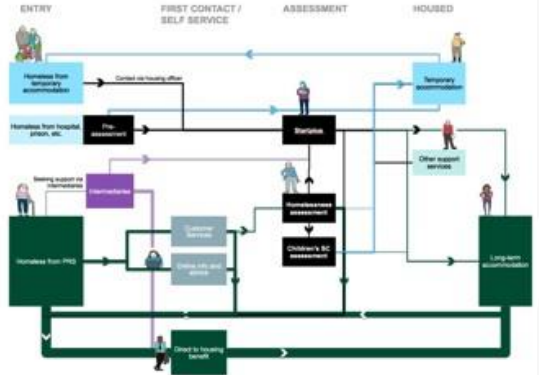
How can we ensure a more **holistic approach** to regeneration where our priorities for **physical** regeneration are clearly linked to our investment in **environmental** and **social** regeneration?

# Our 'discovery' phase

## PHASE 1



Data collection



Service mapping



Ethnographic interviews



Focus groups



Community research



Interviews with professionals and experts

**BROMLEY-BY-BOW CENTRE**  
UK, BROMLEY-BY-BOW

**Healthy living centre and community hub**

The Bromley by Bow Centre is an innovative community organisation in east London who, along with their partners, offer a range of services from a single location based in the heart of the community. Each week they support families, young people and adults of all ages to learn new skills, improve their health and wellbeing, find employment and develop the confidence to achieve their goals and transform their lives. At the core of the Centre's thinking is the belief in people and their capacity to achieve amazing things.

They focus on four areas:

1. Supporting people to overcome chronic illness and unhealthy lifestyles
2. Enabling people to learn new skills
3. Supporting people to become less dependent on benefits and to find work
4. Providing the tools to create an enterprising community

The centre is open to all and provides opportunities for the community to come together and help each other, access services and set up new ideas.

**Impact**

- 100 social prescribing referrals a year from 5 GP practices to over 40 organisations
- 95% of health professional respondents surveyed report they see a benefit to their patients following social prescription including: increased WEMWES scores; improved confidence and autonomy; improved access to services from socially isolated people and those with mental health problems; decreasing repeat GP visits.

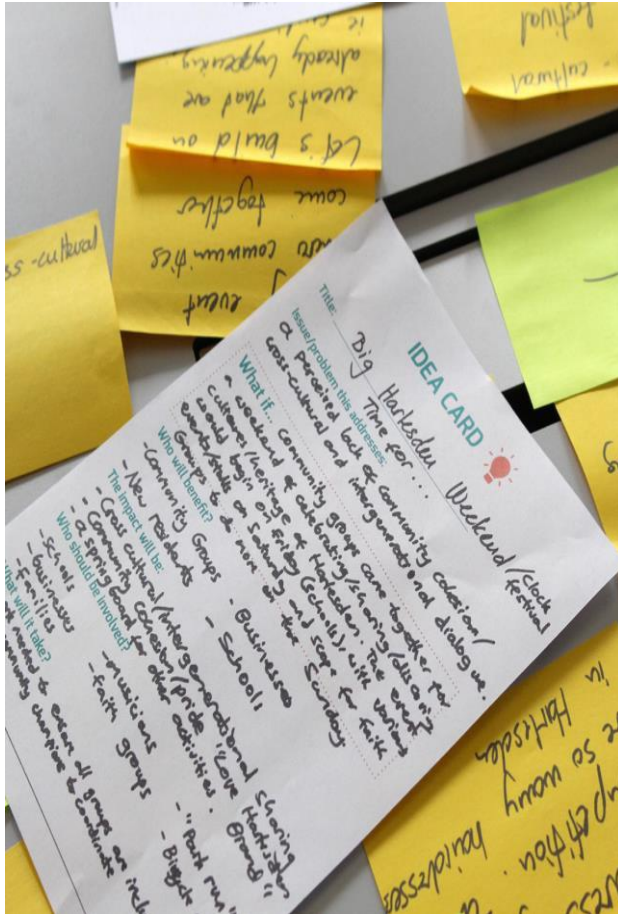
Horizon scanning





# Define

## PHASE 2



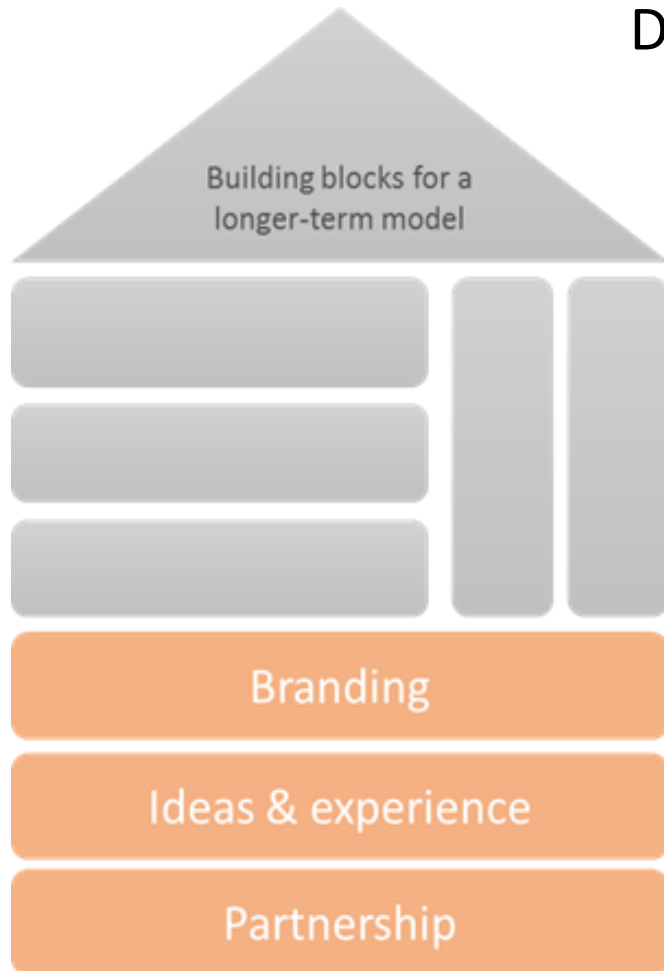
- Held a **Visioning Day** in **June 2016** attended by a range of stakeholders to talk about housing, benefits, employment and regeneration
- Starting with the customer through storytelling and **sharing insights** from the community research
- Identifying **opportunities** that excite us or something we must change
- Agreeing **key issues** we need to prioritise
- Developing **principles** to underpin our work

- Generating **ideas** to take forward

# Building phase 2

PHASE 2

## Developing a temporary hub model for Harlesden



- Based in **Harlesden Library** from **February 2017**
- Open **two days a week** to begin (10am – 6pm, later openings depending on activities planned & demand)
- Run by a **multi-agency team** offering **core information and advice** (Brent Advice Partnership, Crisis, Harlesden Neighbourhood Forum and Brent Council)
- Engaging a range of local organisations and residents to support a wider **programme of information, advice and themed activities**
- Offering a breadth of **support** including housing, employment & benefits advice, as well as **cultural and community activities**



Working on long term solution



# COMMUNITY HUB MODEL

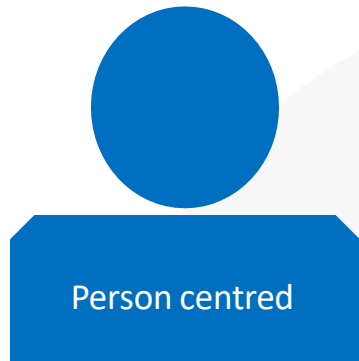
- BAP / BCAN
- Town Centre Manager
- Brent Libraries
- Formal community forum
- Brent Council

## Hub Partners Reference Group

Looks and feels different

Designed and developed with local residents and partners and tailored to local needs

Promotes independence not dependence



Helping people to help themselves and others

Centred on the user not the service

Relational working not signposting

Radical

Digital programme

Local stakeholders & community initiatives

Engagement & consultation

Partnership

Partnership

### CORE OFFER

General advice	Housing advice	Benefit / CTS	Financial inclusion	Employment advice	Social care support services	Digital support	Safety net for most vulnerable
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### SUPPORT & GUIDANCE

Local offer from a range of organisations and community groups



### COMMUNITY SPACE & ACTIVITIES

Space for a programme of community, cultural and themed activities





# Partnership and Locality Approach

- Strong partnerships with VCS organisations embed in Hub localities
- Based in the heart of the communities within libraries
- Services on offer tailored to the needs of the community
- Locations of Hubs means there will be easier access to services for those residents that need it the most across the borough
- Residents feel a strong connection with the Hubs as a result of being located where they are and having organisations they recognise and can identify with being part of them

# Current Hub partners



Advice for Renters	Brent CAB	Paiwand
Age UK	Brent Council Customer Services	Sickle Cell Society
Bosnia and Herzegovina Community Advice Centre	Career Tree	Shaw Trust
Brent Carers Centre	Global Skills	Sherriff Centre
Brent Mind	LQ Group	Step Up Hub
Brent Libraries	Let's Talk Money	Minerva Project
Brent Reach	Living Room	Refugee Council
Brent Council Rents	Royal Voluntary Services	SAAFI
Brent Irish Advisory Service	B3	Iraqi Welfare Association



StreamSkills Advancement Ltd



# Types Of Services Offered

- Support with housing, housing benefit and council tax issues
- Welfare Benefit Support I.e. contacting DWP, form filling, support with appeals
- Money management and budgeting advice, Debt advice and support I'e negotiating payment plans etc.
- Employment support i.e job search, CV writing, job applications etc
- Homelessness risk- Support with tenancy sustainment through financial inclusion and maximising income, support for those facing evictions and tribunals etc
- Specialist community services i.e Women offenders, Balkan Community, Somali speaking, Arabic speaking
- General support i.e contacting utility companies, repairs to homes etc

# Why It Works



- Service is tailored to the needs of the communities Hubs are based in
- 'Thu Hub Ethos' a really different feel and environment which all partners buy into, less corporate and more informal
- Strong relationships and referral process amongst partners
- People not having to tell their stories multiple times
- Deal with issues at point of contact
- Supporting people to become more independent as well as supporting the most vulnerable

# Contact

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