

Report on the Impacts of the Healthier Futures Programme's Closure

March 2025

1. Executive summary

The Healthier Futures Programme, which has provided essential health and wellbeing support to North Kensington residents, especially those affected by the Grenfell Tower fire, is set to end in March 2025. The programme currently supports over 3,500 residents by connecting them with community-based services that address physical and mental health needs.

This report highlights the key findings on the impact of this closure and provides recommendations to mitigate disruption and ensure residents continue receiving the support they need.

Key Findings

- **Impact on Resident:** Over 1,800 individuals and 400 families currently rely on Healthier Futures services. The loss of these services will create major gaps in mental health support, social connection, and physical health interventions, with 100% of providers identifying mental health as the most critical unmet need.
- **Service Disruptions & Provider Sustainability Risks:** 75% of VCS organisations delivering Healthier Futures services face sustainability risks. 67% report serious concerns about their ability to continue operating without alternative funding.
- **Loss of Community Trust & Social Support Networks:** 100% of providers reported that service users feel anxious, disappointed, or uncertain about their future access to wellbeing support. Many residents fear increased social isolation and loss of trusted services.
- **Workforce & Volunteer Reductions:** 88% of organisations anticipate staffing cuts or reduced hours, leading to fewer activities and less capacity to support vulnerable residents.
- **Increased Pressure on NHS Services:** The reduction of preventative community-based services is expected to increase GP and emergency department visits, placing additional strain on already stretched NHS resources.

While the closure of Healthier Futures presents significant challenges, it also provides an opportunity to rethink long-term sustainable funding for community-based health initiatives. This report outlines recommendations to ensure North Kensington residents continue to receive the care and support they need.

2. Context

Since February 2020, the Healthier Futures Programme has provided essential health and wellbeing support to North Kensington residents, particularly those affected by the Grenfell Tower fire. Funded by the North West London Integrated Care Board (NWL ICB) and coordinated by Kensington and Chelsea Social Council (KCSC), the programme has connected people with community-based services, helped them navigate health challenges, and strengthened local support networks.

On 6th January 2025, NHS NWL ICB confirmed that funding for Healthier Futures would end on 31st March 2025, as part of a shift in focus towards supporting those still directly affected by Grenfell through the North Kensington Recovery (NKR) Programme. While this transition marks a change in how support is delivered, it remains uncertain what services will be in place to meet the community's ongoing health and wellbeing needs.

In February 2025, the UK government announced plans to demolish Grenfell Tower, citing structural safety concerns. The dismantling process is expected to begin after the fire's eighth anniversary in June 2025 and take approximately two years. The government has committed to a sensitive demolition process, with plans to incorporate materials from the tower into a future memorial.

The local voluntary and community sector (VCS) has played a critical role in delivering Healthier Futures, and many organisations are now exploring ways to continue supporting residents through this transition. Discussions about future health initiatives are ongoing, but no funding or timeline has been confirmed for new services. As these plans develop, ensuring continuity of care and protecting vulnerable residents must remain a priority for local organisations, funders, and decision-makers.

2.1. Research Approach

To understand the potential effects of the Healthier Futures programme's closure, we sought feedback from both residents and the organisations supporting them. A survey was conducted with the 11 providers delivering services under the programme, and nine organisations responded:

- Pamodzi
- ACAVA
- Community Massage London CIC
- French African Welfare Association
- Dalgarno Trust
- Meanwhile Gardens Community Association
- Family Friends
- Action Disability Kensington and Chelsea
- Venture Community Association

We also visited Pamodzi, ACAVA, and Dalgarno Trust to observe activities and hear directly from residents. Additional feedback was gathered through emails from residents and primary care referrers, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the programme's impact.

3. Resident Perception

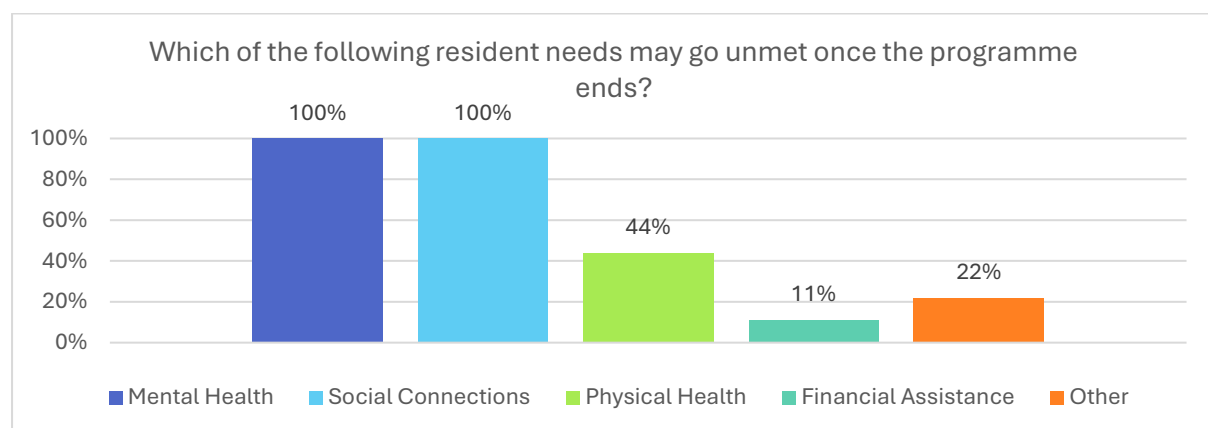
Healthier Futures has been a pivotal programme in the lives of many residents, providing both physical and emotional support. Over the past year, more than 3,500 individuals have benefited from the services, and currently, 1,800 individuals and over 400 families rely on the programme. As the closure of the programme approaches, there is significant concern among residents regarding the future of their wellbeing and the availability of alternative support services.

3.1. Resident Vulnerability and Unmet Needs

The "Healthier Futures" programme has had a profound positive impact on residents, with a remarkable 28% increase in overall wellbeing. It has positively influenced happiness, boosted confidence, reduced anxiety, and fostered a strong sense of community. By bringing people closer together, the programme has significantly enhanced the lives of those who participated.

However, with growing concern among residents about the potential closure of the programme, there is increasing uncertainty about the future of their health and wellbeing support. Without a clear plan for ongoing wellbeing services, many residents are fearful of a significant gap in support before any new initiatives are put in place.

The chart below shows the concern that residents have around the gap of services that the transition from Healthier Futures and a new programme, and the effects it might have on them.



Mental health support has been identified as a major gap with **100% of responses highlighting the lack of accessible mental health services and social activities**. These services have been essential in combating social isolation, which is seen as another major concern. Many residents have relied on the programme to build and maintain social connections, and its loss will deepen their sense of isolation.

Moreover, the absence of physical health services could lead to deteriorating health outcomes, particularly for individuals with pre-existing conditions. Service providers, including Dalgarno Trust, Community Massage London CIC, and Pamodzi, have reported growing concern from residents about the potential loss of regular wellbeing activities. For example, one resident shared:

"Massage therapy has been life-saving for me. The NHS is struggling to support my complex conditions, and without these sessions, I would be trapped in bed with no relief. These services are vital for people like me who don't have many alternatives."

These activities have been crucial in managing both the physical and mental health of residents, and without them, the community will face an uncertain and potentially harmful gap in their health and wellbeing support.

3.2. Residents' Concerns

Many residents have expressed fear and anxiety about losing access to vital services. Pamodzi reported that before any formal conversations had taken place, residents were already worried due to circulating rumours about the programme's closure. Meanwhile Gardens Community Association echoed this concern, stating that residents:

"Are really disappointed and really hoping we will be able to find funding from somewhere in order to continue."

For certain services, the closure is perceived as a direct threat to residents' health and wellbeing. Community Massage London CIC shared feedback from clients who are shocked and extremely worried about losing access to a service that has provided both physical and emotional relief. *One of the participants of the service shared:*

"Knowing that the funding is no longer available to continue these vital sessions for me and my community is incredibly disappointing. The NHS is already struggling to support disabled people. Taking away these sessions will leave many of us with no alternative support. I hope they can reconsider the decision to cut this funding and find a way to reinstate it. Disabled people in this borough are being failed time and time again, and we cannot afford to lose yet another crucial support service."

Many stated that these sessions had been the only NHS intervention that had helped them, with benefits including reduced anxiety, improved sleep, better mobility, and pain management. This concern is particularly pronounced in Lancaster West, where residents are already dealing with the compounded stress of ongoing disruptions related to the Grenfell Tower demolition. Additionally, GPs and referrers have expressed disappointment, recognising the programme's significant impact on patient wellbeing.

"Your service has been such a fantastic support to all our patients in North Kensington and it has been incredible to have been able to work with you all. I do hope ICB will recommission the service again."

Several providers noted a sense of loss and frustration among service users. French African Welfare Association (FAWA) reported that residents feel let down, while Action Disability Kensington and Chelsea (ADKC) highlighted that members are:

"Angry that these services will no longer be funded."

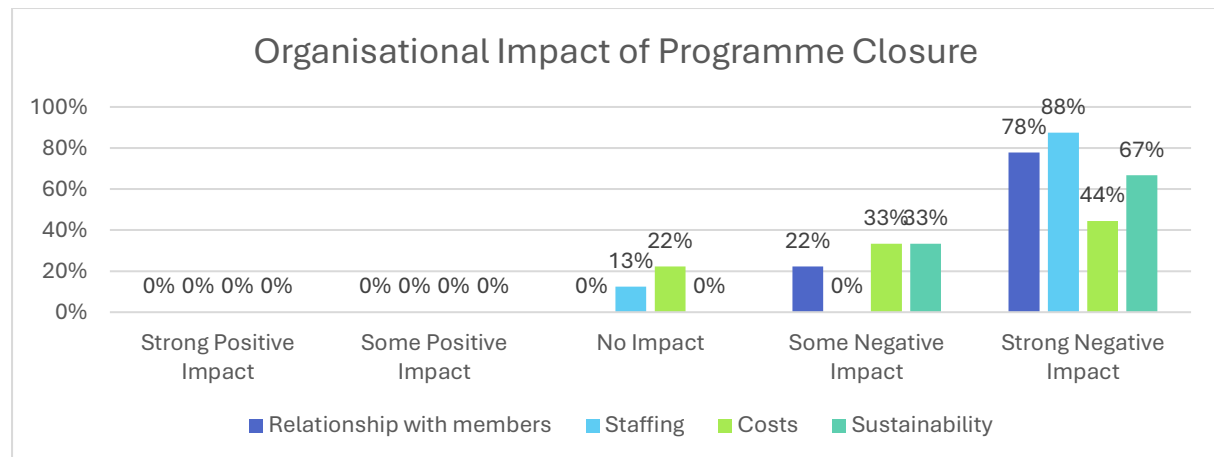
Dalgarno Trust reported that service users, upon hearing about the closure, immediately asked if they could provide feedback, demonstrating their strong connection to and reliance on the programme.

4. Organisational Impact

While residents are the primary affected group, the closure also significantly disrupts the VCS organisations that provided these services. Surveyed providers expressed serious concerns about their ability to continue services, citing financial losses, staff reductions, and a breakdown of trust with their service users. These disruptions not only threaten the stability of

the organisations but also leave residents without critical services, support networks, and trusted spaces they depend on.

The following chart illustrates the responses gathered from providers regarding the overall organisational impact of the programme closure. Below is an in-depth analysis of the key challenges identified.



4.1. Sustainability

The closure of the programme has placed long-term sustainability at risk for 100% of the organisations providing services for Healthier Futures. 67% of organisations reported serious concerns about their ability to continue operating. The loss of funding, which contributed to core costs, has made it difficult for organisations to secure alternative grants or partnerships, threatening their financial viability.

Pamodzi faces a critical risk of closure, with their team explaining:

"The impact on our organisation is huge. As a small organisation, this could mean closure, which is a shame for a service that is going well. We haven't got enough time to fundraise before the project ends—most funding takes up to four months. We will lose our venue, volunteers, and sessional workers."

Similarly, ACAVA and Community Massage London CIC expressed concerns about financial instability, as they struggle to cover essential operational costs. Dalgarno Trust highlighted the long-term consequences for digital inclusion services:

"The loss of funding will significantly impact Dalgarno Trust's ability to continue delivering digital inclusion services. Without funding, these services will be discontinued, limiting access to online resources, NHS apps, and essential digital tools."

Other organisations, such as Family Friends and ADKC, reported a less immediate but still significant financial strain. ADKC stated:

"We will continue to deliver these essential services, paying for them from our reserves. This is not sustainable."

4.2. Costs

The financial burden of winding down services has varied, but all organisations are absorbing unexpected costs. **44% of organisations reported strong direct financial losses** due to redundancy costs, storage expenses, and lost income opportunities.

Community Massage London CIC faces immediate financial burdens, including high storage costs for equipment and staff redundancies, while Dalgarno Trust faces expenses related to redundancies and returning equipment:

"The key impacts include staff redundancies. The closure may lead to job losses for Digital Champions and support staff involved in the programme. This could result in a loss of expertise and reduced capacity to support digital inclusion efforts."

ACAVA described the struggles of redirecting limited funding, stating:

"Full Cost Recovery for full-year delivery is £38,000, and we've been able to divert £12,500 to fund direct delivery costs until the end of September. This short-notice (three-month) redirection of funding from core costs to this project has disrupted operations and increased our need for alternative funding sources."

4.3. Staffing

The most common staffing challenge is the reduction of paid staff and sessional workers, leading to decreased service capacity. **88% of organisations reported strong staffing disruptions**, including job losses, reduced hours, and fewer sessional workers. There is a significant challenge in retaining experienced staff, which directly affects service continuity.

Community Massage London CIC is at risk of losing key therapists, which could disrupt their ability to deliver services:

"We depend on our therapists to provide essential services. Losing them means not only reducing capacity but potentially losing the relationships we've built with our patients and GP surgeries."

Family Friends anticipates cutting staff hours, further limiting their ability to meet service demand:

"Once the programme ends, we will have to decrease hours for some staff. This means less impact, less reach, and an increased reliance on volunteers, who may not be able to offer the same level of support."

For organisations like Pamodzi, which rely on sessional workers, the uncertainty around funding is driving staff to seek more stable opportunities elsewhere, further destabilising service delivery.

4.4. Relationships with Members

The programme's closure has had a profound impact on community trust, with **100% of surveyed organisations reporting a negative impact on their relationships with service users**. 78% cited a strong negative impact, expressing concerns about long-term disengagement from services.

Pamodzi highlighted concerns about increasing social isolation among their members: *"We hope people don't go back to staying in their homes and refusing to access any services, just suffering in silence. The members we work with often feel isolated, and now they have even fewer options."*

Similarly, the French African Welfare Association (FAWA) stressed that rebuilding trust will be difficult, stating: *"The main difficulty will be regaining people's trust."*

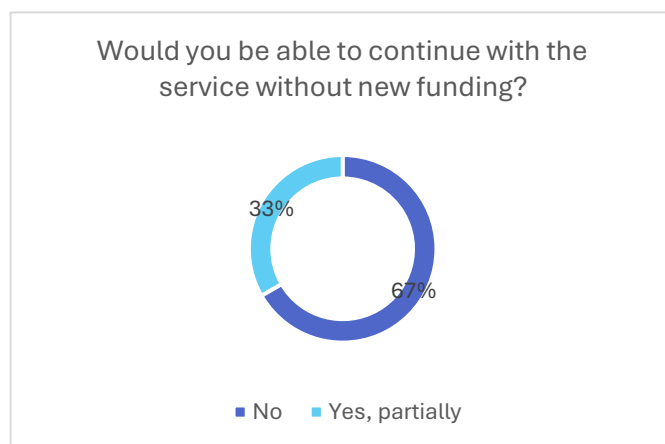
5. Reopening challenges

The transition period following the closure of the programme presents major obstacles for service providers attempting to resume operations. Without guaranteed funding or structural support, organisations face multiple barriers that could severely impact service delivery to North Kensington residents.

5.1. Effects on Service Continuity

The ability of organisations to continue providing support varies significantly, with most reporting major constraints. Only three out of eight organisations surveyed stated that they could offer some level of support through external grants, but these are not sufficient to comprehensively meet residents' needs. **67% of providers indicated that they lack the resources to sustain services beyond a short**

period after the closure, as existing funding will not cover the full gap before a new programme is implemented. Even those able to offer partial services are heavily dependent on securing additional funding, which is not guaranteed.



Reopening services is not a straightforward process. Many organisations stressed that resuming operations will take time, requiring between one and three months to re-establish staff, secure venues, complete necessary certifications, and rebuild referral pathways. Pamodzi explained: *"The longer we stay without the service, the longer it will take."*

Community Massage London CIC estimated that they will need six to twelve weeks to recruit and train staff, ensure all are DBS-checked and DSP-trained, and secure venue partnerships. Although some providers have managed to extend their services for a few months beyond the conclusion of the Healthier Futures Programme, the lack of renewed funding beyond this period will negatively impact residents' perceptions of the support they receive, the organisations providing it, and their overall health and wellbeing.

5.2. Limited Alternative Support for transition

Organisations are working hard to integrate affected residents into alternative services to soften the impact of the closure. For instance, Family Friends is incorporating residents into their core

services to prevent an abrupt loss of support. However, this solution isn't possible for everyone. Many organisations have indicated that while they can provide partial support, their existing resources are not sufficient to maintain services at the same level for much longer.

This leaves residents in a difficult position, as many essential services they rely on face imminent disruption or scaling back. The organisations that remain committed to continuing support are doing so by using limited reserves or redirecting funds from other projects, but the sustainability of these measures is uncertain. Here's an overview of how each organisation plans to continue their services and the timelines involved:

Organisation	Name of Activity	Continuation
ACAVA	Cultivate Create	Yes, until September by redirecting other funding from core costs to this project (committed to extend for 6 months).
Action Disability K&C (ADKC)	Legal Advice Project, Trauma Support Group, Positive Empowerment Group	Yes, until September; they will continue delivering these services using reserves.
Clement James	I.A.G - Information, advice, guidance	Yes
Community Massage London (CML)	"North Kensington Self-Care Programme Complementary Therapies Service"	Golborne Razak is establishing an interim, matched-funded service at the surgery. A trial is expected from April. Discussions are ongoing. There are still services in Hammersmith for £5, but not free for North Kensington residents.
Dalgarno Trust	Digital Champions	No, will close immediately as contract concludes funding.
Family Friends	Evolve NK	Yes, will continue supporting with service adjustments, but will use reserves to sustain services.
FAWA	Active for Health	No, lack the resources to continue.
Meanwhile Gardens	Music & Movement at the Playhut	Yes, until mid-May (6 more weeks).
Pamodzi	Pamodzi Caring Hands	Yes, until April as they rely on volunteers who are willing to continue for a month. After this, without new funding, closure is likely.
Volunteer Centre (VCKC)	Community Connections	Yes, until June
Volunteer Centre (VCKC)	Yoga	Yes, until June, but with fewer instructors, meaning fewer sessions.
Venture Centre	Nutrition and cooking	Yes, until June with some adjustments; will continue doing community lunches.

All of these organisations are actively seeking funding to continue providing services similar to what was offered under the Healthier Futures programme. Without this funding, they face significant challenges in maintaining their capacity to support residents effectively in the long term.

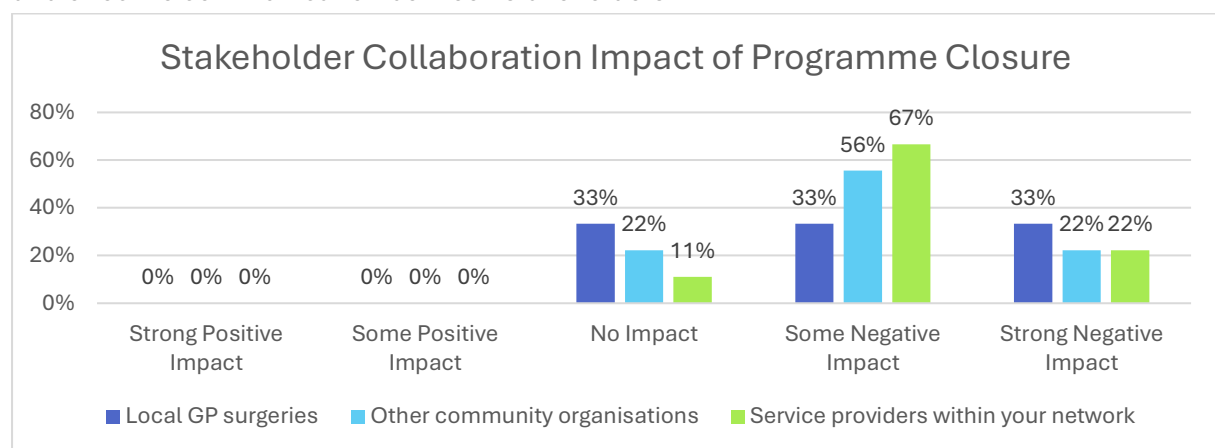
5.3. Transition Challenges: No Clear Alternative in Place

Although discussions about a new programme are ongoing, there is currently no confirmed start date or framework. This uncertainty has created a service gap leaving residents without the support they need to maintain their health and quality of life.

6. Stakeholder Collaboration

The programme played a key role in connecting residents with a range of support services. Without this collaboration, residents may experience more fragmented care and difficulty accessing appropriate services.

The cessation of funding has raised significant concerns among service providers, particularly regarding disruptions in collaboration with key stakeholders such as local GP surgeries, other community organisations, and service networks. Many providers anticipate that these disruptions will affect the overall delivery of services, particularly in referrals, continuity of care, and effective communication between stakeholders.



6.1. GP Surgeries & Healthcare Providers

The programme played a critical role in connecting residents with healthcare providers, ensuring a multidisciplinary approach to care. However, **66% of respondents reported that the programme's closure will negatively impact their ability to work with GP surgeries and NHS partners**, particularly in relation to referral pathways and care coordination.

Without a structured collaboration between VCS organisations and NHS services, patients risk experiencing delays or disruptions in accessing the care they need. Providers expressed concerns that fragmented communication will make it increasingly difficult to ensure that patients receive comprehensive support, leading to gaps in care and missed opportunities for early intervention.

6.2. Voluntary Sector Partnerships

Collaboration within the VCS is also under strain. **89% of respondents indicated a decline in their ability to work effectively with other voluntary sector organisations** with the programme's closure.

The cessation of funding has led to fragmented support systems, as services that once worked cohesively to meet the diverse needs of residents now face barriers to work together. Previously, organisations could refer residents to complementary services, ensuring that physical, emotional, and social wellbeing needs were met holistically.

7. Recommendations for Future Support

Given the significant impact of the Healthier Futures Programme's closure, immediate and long-term measures are needed to prevent service disruptions, protect vulnerable residents, and ensure the sustainability of community-based health initiatives. These recommendations are based on feedback from residents, service providers, and healthcare partners.

7.1. Immediate Actions (next 6 months)

To prevent a sudden loss of services, the following measures should be implemented:

- **Bridge Funding** – NWL ICB should work with KCSC to explore bridge funding to ensure that residents continue to receive support whilst long-term plans are put in place.
- **Service Exit Plan** – KCSC should develop a clear plan with voluntary and community sector (VCS) partners to support residents who have been accessing Healthier Futures to access alternative support and services.
- **Referral Pathway Coordination** – The NHS should work with KCSC to make sure GPs and Social Prescribers are aware of Healthier Futures Programme is ending.
- **Capacity-Building Support for VCS Organisations** – KCSC should provide training and support for fundraising applications, helping VCS organisations secure alternative funding.
- **Health and Wellbeing Network** – NHS and KCSC should commit to continuing North Kensington Health & Wellbeing networks to maintain a connection between the VCS and NHS.

7.2. Long-Term Solutions

To prevent recurring cycles of instability, the following long-term strategies should be adopted:

- **Sustainable Multi-Year Funding Models** – Future NHS-commissioned wellbeing programmes should adopt longer-term (3-5 year) funding cycles, reducing reliance on short-term contracts that create uncertainty for service providers and residents.
- **Community-Led Programme Design** – The co-production of future health initiatives should involve residents, VCS organisations, and healthcare partners, ensuring that services reflect local needs and priorities.
- **Better Notice Periods for Funding Changes** – A minimum 6-month transition period should be required for any major funding shifts, allowing service providers time to adjust, secure funding, and retain staff.
- **Improved Integration Between NHS & VCS** – Future programmes should strengthen partnerships between community organisations, GPs, and NHS commissioners, creating a more coordinated and resilient health system.
- **Data-Driven Advocacy & Impact Measurement** – A standardized impact measurement framework should be implemented to track the effectiveness of community-led health interventions, making the case for continued investment.

By implementing these short-term and long-term measures, stakeholders can ensure that North Kensington residents continue to receive high-quality, community-based health and wellbeing support, preventing widening health inequalities and maintaining trust in public health interventions.

8. Conclusion

The closure of the Healthier Futures Programme presents a significant risk to the health and wellbeing of North Kensington residents, particularly those affected by the Grenfell Tower fire. The loss of these services will leave significant gaps in mental health support, social connection, and preventative care, placing the most vulnerable at greater risk of isolation and increased reliance on NHS services.

Findings from this report highlight the widespread impact on both residents and voluntary sector organisations. Thousands of people who rely on these services will be left without alternatives, while many community organisations that deliver essential support are facing severe financial strain, with some at risk of shutting down entirely. There are also serious concerns about the erosion of trust, as service users disengage from wellbeing initiatives that have played a crucial role in their recovery and overall health. Without intervention, the strain on NHS and emergency services will escalate, as community-led care is no longer available to absorb demand.

Despite these challenges, the programme has demonstrated the strength of community networks and the value of voluntary sector-led health initiatives. To prevent long-term harm, it is essential that funding gaps are urgently addressed and that a structured transition plan is put in place. This report outlines key recommendations to protect residents and ensure continuity of care.

Failing to address these challenges will widen health inequalities, increase NHS costs, and weaken community trust in public health interventions. Immediate action is necessary to prevent further harm and to build a more sustainable, community-led approach to health and wellbeing in North Kensington.