

1.3 Case Study

Inspirational Islington Giving

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Islington is a borough of striking social extremes. London's richest and poorest residents exist side by side, living entirely different lives.

When you think of Islington, you think of expensive restaurants, Sadler's Wells, the Guardian, beautiful squares, and prominent politicians. It's where gentrification started in London in the 1970s. But it's one of the poorest and most unequal places in the country.

In 2008 Cripplegate Foundation commissioned a report, 'Invisible Islington: Living in Poverty in Inner London' which shone a light on the

lives of Islington's poorest residents. The manifestations of poverty in 21st Century are insecure employment but also isolation and mental ill health. And it's being locked out of the myriad of opportunities in Islington and London. Much of this poverty is invisible.

This was a catalyst for funders – Cripplegate Foundation, Breadsticks Foundation, City Bridge Trust, Cloudesley, the Morris Charitable Trust, and later the Macquarie Foundation, to come together to set up Islington Giving in September 2010.

We knew that giving grants was not enough. The stubborn issues of poverty and inequality cannot be tackled by one organisation or sector alone. We are an independent

group of funders, businesses, residents and voluntary organisations working together to tackle poverty and inequality in Islington. We take practical action through grant making, networking and fundraising. Between us we have over 1,000 years of experience of working in Islington.

We want Islington to be a place where everyone, regardless of circumstances can lead a fulfilled life. Underpinning Islington Giving is deep, local knowledge and reciprocity.

We believe that everyone can make a difference and we know that our impact is greatest when we work together. We shine a light on an invisible Islington and advocate for change.



Islington Giving is ambitious and successful. It's a new way of bringing together 'unusual suspects', ranging from grant makers like Cripplegate Foundation founded in 1500 to Expedia, the international travel company, along with a local family restaurant and the Arsenal Foundation. Islington Giving has been described as a 'groundbreaking campaign' tackling the most pressing issues in the borough.

So what has Islington Giving achieved?

- We raise money – Over £5m since our launch from businesses, residents and funders
- We bring new resources and opportunities to Islington through linking businesses, residents and voluntary organisations e.g. work experience, opening venues, volunteering
- We make the business case for investing in Islington Giving; 13 businesses have come into the borough to mentor young people in schools and colleges and offer skilled support to voluntary organisations
- We shine a light on the levels of poverty and inequality and its manifestations – mental ill health, isolation, reduced life expectancy
- We change lives. Islington Giving alone cannot move the dial on poverty and inequality but we can unlock opportunities. Islington Giving challenges public and voluntary sector organisations to run interesting and exciting services, activities and events at times and places that residents want.

This means weekends rather than Monday mornings for older people; during school holidays and weekends for families and young people. We've invested in 60 organisations since 2010.

- We have recruited over 4,000 volunteers and supported over 16,000 residents
- We bring people together, whether this is 100 women for Islington Giving's breakfast on International Women's Day, or Walk The Line, the 13.1 mile walk around the borough boundary wearing the Islington Giving t-shirt.

Islington Giving started as a campaign, but now has a permanent role in the borough. This is not the dream of economist E. F. Schumacher that 'small is beautiful', it's about grassroots action, understanding, listening and doing. We recognise that we have just started to make a difference and we are determined to make a long-lasting impact in Islington.

➤ www.islingtongiving.org.uk

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In Islington

38%

of children live in poverty. We have the least open space in England, the highest levels of depression in London, some of the country's poorest pensioners and the borough is in the bottom

20%

of deprived areas in England.

