



JOHN LYON'S CHARITY

Impact Report

2009-2018



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This report was carried out in partnership with the Institute for Voluntary Action Research (IVAR) – an independent research charity working closely with people and organisations striving for social change. They work nationally across the voluntary, public and funding sectors, using research to develop practical responses to challenges and creating opportunities for people to learn from their findings.

Impact Report

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Foreword

John Lyon's Charity is the largest independent funder in North and West London that supports children's and young people's charities. Our aim continues to be to transform the lives of children and young people by creating opportunities to learn, grow and develop which would not exist without our contribution. We have been awarding grants for over 25 years, starting with a grant expenditure of less than £200K in 1991. We now award in the region of £12 million each year and have granted over £130 million in total. At any one time we have over 600 live grants in operation. As a funder with a specific geographic area, we have been in a privileged position to really understand the boroughs in our Beneficial Area (Barnet, Brent, Camden, Brent, Ealing, Hammersmith & Fulham, Harrow, Kensington & Chelsea and the Cities of London and Westminster); their specific needs, who the major stakeholders are and how we can best help. We work with the organisations based within those boroughs to learn from them and respond to the needs of the communities living in those areas. We really do 'grant-making by walking around', which is why those 600 live grants are with us all of the time.

Our long and sustained presence in these boroughs has allowed the Charity to build a solid reputation for consistency, reliability and flexibility, offering funding for high quality initiatives where they are most needed, as well as supporting organisations with capacity building. We are known for funding longstanding initiatives that need help to 'keep the lights on' as well as being open to innovation and funding new pieces of work that push boundaries. We are not afraid to take informed risks, and we are grateful to our Trustee for being so supportive and open-minded about the work we do.

We are known for recognising the importance of offering core funding for organisations; we are known for offering flexibility with funding and listening to the needs of grantee organisations; we are known for providing support to grant applicants to help them along their journey; we are known to be fair on organisations without impacting on quality. There have been countless individuals who have benefited from funding from John Lyon's Charity over the past 25 years. We have helped many organisations survive over the years and sadly seen others disappear as they succumb to the many challenges facing the voluntary sector, not least the severe funding cuts from local and central government since 2010. What this has shown us is that longevity of funding is key.

It is easy to assume that by awarding grants to organisations that work with children and young people, we will be having a positive impact on their lives and indeed on the organisations that work with them. But how do we know? How do we know if what we are doing is making a difference? In early 2019, John Lyon's Charity commissioned the Institute for Voluntary Action Research (IVAR) to take a look at the grants we have made over the past

25 years. Using the last ten years as a focused study, we asked IVAR to use this information to consider what impact the Charity has had in the Beneficial Area over that period. Using five of the Charity's key funding areas (Children & Families, Youth Clubs and Youth Activities, Emotional Wellbeing, Special Needs and Disabilities and Education & Learning) the following report sets out the impact of the Charity's funding throughout the Beneficial Area. It looks at the context within which the Charity and its beneficiaries have been operating, and using interviews with grant recipients, staff members and case studies, examines the impact of the Charity in each area to look forward to what this means for the Charity's strategy over the next 5-10 years.

We are delighted that, in conclusion, the Charity is perceived well by its grantees and to be effective in its grant making. We are well regarded by the organisations that work in the Beneficial Area, who value the work that the Charity does beyond offering financial support. Our work on building the capacity of the voluntary sector is key to helping those organisations to survive and thrive. We will use the findings of this report to develop key areas of strategy around our giving, particularly in relation to special needs and disability, emotional wellbeing and the implementation of a new Internship programme.

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to all of the organisations who generously gave their time to be part of a series of focus groups to help inform this report, and in particular to those who allowed us to use their stories as part of the case studies.

We are proud of our achievements over the past 25 years, but we are only as good or effective as the organisations who trust us to get things right. We are sincere in the value we place in the voluntary sector in our boroughs and endeavour to do all we can to continue getting it right, continue to be a reliable source of funding and continue to be a trusted source of advice and guidance wherever we can.



Dr Lynne Guyton
Chief Executive Officer

November 2019

1

Introduction

The Institute for Voluntary Action Research (IVAR) was commissioned to support John Lyon's Charity (the Charity or JLC) in exploring the contribution it has made to charities and organisations supporting young people in nine London boroughs.

The aim of the review was to support the Charity as it considers its potential role as an influencer and thought leader. Specifically, to feed into exploration of what it means to be a responsible funder in 2019 – and moving towards a thought leadership role: *'What are the practical steps that we can take from the research and where does it go? What are the new ideas? Are we doing a good job now and is it a question of doing more of it? Are there areas we've overlooked? Are we missing out on listening to some of our stakeholders?'* (Staff scoping interview).

In this report, we bring together findings from the review and draw out key messages about the contribution of John Lyon's Charity.

Our approach

The review focused on exploring the contribution made by John Lyon's Charity over 10 years (2009-2018) in five Programme Areas. The decision to look at this time period was agreed in discussion with the Charity on the basis that it covers a time period characterised by significant shifts in the funding landscape and withdrawal of the state as a result of austerity measures introduced in 2008. In addition to the deepening of austerity and ongoing cuts, there have been other changes: increasingly fractious and polarised politics; different ways in which people relate and have a voice in a digital age; and reduced public trust in the voluntary sector. Therefore, it was felt timely to use a '10 year outlook' to reflect on the systems within which organisations work to learn about the actual and potential contribution of John Lyon's Charity.

Five Programme Areas were selected in consultation with the John Lyon's Charity team:

1. **Children and Families**
2. **Youth Clubs and Youth Activities**
3. **Emotional Wellbeing**
4. **Special Educational Needs and Disabilities**
5. **Education and Learning**

These five Programme Areas are not isolated themes and overlap throughout the report findings. However, for the purpose of this review, we address each Programme Area separately before, in the final section of this report, reflecting on JLC's overall contribution.

The review gathered data in a number of ways. In total we spoke with 45 grantee organisations (see Appendix One) and undertook the following activities:

- Scoping interviews with six staff and trustees to help shape the focus of the review and bring about initial learning about the five Programme Areas.
- Analysis of the Charity's existing grants data to understand the scale and focus of grants provided in each Programme Area.
- Issue-specific policy analysis to explore key features in the operating environment for each Programme Area.
- Five focus groups with grantees (one in each Programme Area) to gather perspectives on: the needs of children and young people in that Programme Area; the contribution of John Lyon's Charity support and funding; and what role the Charity might usefully play in future. The sample of grantees was selected in discussion with John Lyon's Charity to provide a range in terms of: grant size; organisational income; activity/focus; length of time funded by (or relationship with) with the Charity.
- A short online survey of grantees to gather perspectives from organisations that could not attend focus groups but wanted to contribute to the review.
- Case studies of five grantee organisations (one from each Programme Area) exploring: their work with young people; perceived contribution of John Lyon's Charity support; what would help them to survive and thrive in future.

This report outlines findings from the review, looking at each Programme Area in turn, before exploring what the findings mean for the Charity. We draw on data from across the five Programme Areas, presenting anonymised quotations from grantees in italics as illustration where appropriate. Each Programme Area contains a grantee case study; the copy for which has been agreed with the participating organisation.



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Review Findings

In this section, we outline findings from each of the five Programme Areas, drawing on data from: scoping interviews; focus groups and a survey with grantees; case studies with grantees from each of the five Programme Areas; and analysis of political and social policy 2009-2018.

Three main roles for JLC to explore further emerged from the fieldwork with grantees – championing, supporting and providing. We use this framing to explore what the Charity’s response might be within each Programme Area.

Children and Families

The early years are vital for a child's development. A stable and supportive home life contributes to the successful emotional and psychological development of a child. A child's family life may be disrupted by relationship breakdown, bereavement, domestic violence, family health issues, or economic difficulties. This has implications for the stability and support that a child receives, with significant knock-on effects. Children who are not receiving adequate care and attention at home are more likely to exhibit challenging and disruptive behaviour at school and struggle as a result.

What's happening in the operating environment?

Within England, ongoing policy debates around children and families are heavily framed by the impact of financial austerity. Our policy review and focus groups with grantees revealed families hard hit by a range of austerity measures, including:

- **Reforms to the welfare payment systems**, including the introduction of benefit caps and Universal Credit.
- **Real term reductions in welfare payments**, with a four-year freeze on children's benefits (child benefit and child elements in tax credits and Universal Credit) now in place until 2020/21.¹
- **Limited support with high housing costs**, which is exacerbated by an inadequate supply of social or low-rent properties.

In the face of this, it is increasingly challenging for parents to provide for their children and maintain a stable and supportive home life. This is particularly the case for a growing number of poor and vulnerable families. More than two million families with children under five live in relative poverty and the number of poor children in working families is rising.²

While these issues have been present and increasing since 2008, government policy to date has not made significant attempts to address them. However, in recent years, several initiatives have been put in place, most notably the £920 million Troubled Families programme,³ with early evidence suggesting it is achieving benefits for some families.⁴ The initiative has been generally welcomed, but the Government has been criticised for failing to address wider financial pressures on the local authority services that support children and families.

Indeed, overall funding for preventative, early intervention work has drastically reduced over the last decade. Since 2013, the Government's Early Intervention grant has been cut by £600 million.⁵ Funding for Sure Start – the government's flagship scheme to support early years – has dropped by 50% (a reduction of £763 million) since 2010.⁶ Local authority spending on early intervention services has also fallen – dropping by 49% since 2012.⁷ London boroughs, including those served by John Lyon's Charity, have been some of the hardest hit by these cuts.⁸ Research identifying funding cut 'hot spots' showed Camden and Westminster to be in the top five worst hit areas, meaning the boroughs have seen funding reductions of around 50% per child between 2010 and 2018.⁹ Hammersmith and Fulham is also in the top 20 hotspots, with a 42% fall in funding for children's services during the same period.

Alongside this decrease in funding for early intervention, there has been a 12% increase on spending for 'later intervention' services across the UK.⁹ This response appears to be an attempt to support the increasing numbers of children and families accessing services.¹⁰

Under growing financial constraints, local authorities are facing severe budgetary pressures and struggling to maintain vital front-line services. As a result, they increasingly focus on preserving statutory provision to meet the needs of the most vulnerable, often withdrawing non-statutory services. Consequently, many areas have seen the closure of children's centres and other early intervention services:

'We don't rely on statutory funding now. We were a children's centre for a year but then we had a 90% funding cut with no notice and decided not to risk that again. Less than 25% of our income comes from the local authority now.' (Grantee)

Grantee organisations described the local shift from grants-based funding to local authority commissioning as a *'one size fits all approach that doesn't work'*. This has created tension and competition between organisations locally and made it difficult to collaborate. Grantees in this review, explained that the local authorities now focus on scale and reach rather than the social value that the voluntary and community sector can provide. This shift was felt to be at odds with what children and families really need, described as *'a focus on outcomes and cost-effectiveness, rather than quality provision for children and families'*.

The state of local authority provision has significant implications for non-statutory providers within the voluntary sector. While local authority provision is declining, families' needs are increasing and we heard of voluntary organisations being left 'picking up the pieces'. Furthermore, with a loss of local authority funding for non-statutory services, some voluntary organisations have closed, placing increased demand on those that remain.

Overall, the system of support provision to children and families is under stress. Families are struggling with the consequences of welfare reform and loss of support services. Voluntary organisations that deliver non-statutory services are seeing the withdrawal of government funding, but a rise in demand for their services. More families are reaching crisis point and more children are being taken into local authority care.

In addition, grantees explained that local level policy changes had further impacted their ability to support families effectively. For example, changes to – and variation between – operating systems across boroughs, including the way 'early intervention' is defined. This has led to organisations receiving referrals with greater needs than they are equipped to handle. Furthermore, changes in infrastructure and support for each borough make it difficult to know which departments or charity partners to connect with, compounded by frequent staff turnover in local authority representatives.

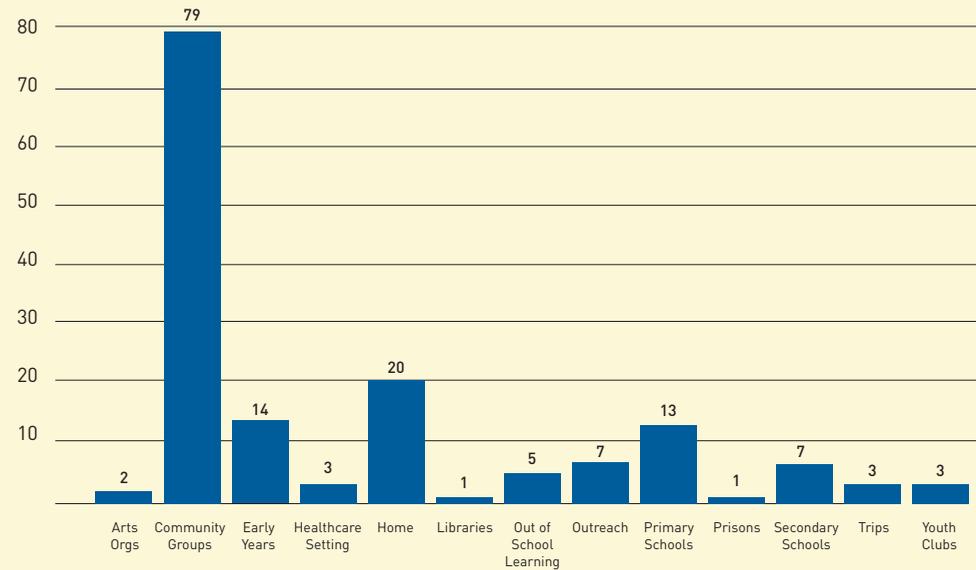
The contribution of John Lyon's Charity to the Children and Family Programme Area

Between 2009 and 2018, John Lyon's Charity made 158 grants, totalling £7.6 million, to support children and families.

In the face of the significant cuts described on page 10, the Charity has continued to invest in children and families. It has funded organisations that:

- Work with and alongside young people to develop their strengths, skills and sense of purpose.
- Support community-led change and build stronger communities, particularly supporting new members of the community (e.g. refugees) to build fulfilling lives in London.
- Focus on empowering and enabling families to advocate on their own behalf and prevent them falling into crisis.

Figure 1 Grants awarded by project setting



John Lyon's Charity aims to invest in children from the earliest possible moment in their lives. The Charity funds organisations that support families and the networks around them. Funding investments made between 2009 and 2018 have enabled grantee organisations to continue providing early intervention and preventative support to families, so that they do not reach crisis point. For example, they cover Home-Start and family support, parent mentoring, children mentoring, nursery provision, after-school care, supplementary schools, homework support, school holiday play schemes, a community library and local infrastructure and network organisations (see Figure 1). These organisations have seen improvements to parenting skills and child behaviour, as well as reductions in parental and family stress.

The services that the Charity has supported were described by grantees as the types of services that may otherwise have been lost in the aftermath of austerity measures. This was, in part because the John Lyon's Charity is 'guided by the expertise of those they fund':

'Initially they came to us, as they'd heard about our youth support work but in discussions we said that funding our play work would be the most important thing – that's what young people need. They listened, they were happy to fund it.' (Grantee)

Grantees described the important role the Charity has played in providing multi-year core funding during challenging times; and helping organisations to adapt and respond to the changing environment with greater confidence and financial stability:

'I think they're quite strategic because they gave us three years' core funding – they get that we can concentrate on the real work that way.'

This was particularly important for grantees in the review that supported families affected by the Grenfell Tower fire through bereavement and trauma support: *'There's still fear, and people know it's not necessarily going to affect them but they are scared and there's anger and a distrust of authority'*.

The Charity's place-based commitment, alongside supporting children and families, was valued by grantees as a refreshing change to the 'quantity over quality' approach they believed local authorities had taken. John Lyon's Charity is seen as a funder that understands context and this has enabled trusting relationships with grantees. As a result, many organisations in the review talked about being able to adapt and respond to the changing needs of their communities, rather than being driven by a set of top-down outcomes:

'Generally it feels [that] they are working together with you, alongside you.'

'I felt I could be open and honest about the challenges we were facing and their support allowed us to adapt and try different things out, funding wise, as well as delivery.'

In addition to understanding the local complexities surrounding charities, grantees felt that the Charity's thorough and holistic knowledge of the voluntary sector has enabled JLC to support long-standing community organisations to stabilise:

'We had no reserves and they were comfortable with funding us anyway. They understood we were working to build the reserves back up over the coming years.'

In this way, organisations have been able to offer services that respond to need and have a role to play in early intervention and prevention. The Charity has also brokered connections between grantee organisations which has led to new referral pathways for children and families, and enabled some organisations to expand their services despite challenging times: *'We've extended our reach into neighbouring boroughs'*.

Shepherds Bush Families Project

What they do and who they seek to support

The Shepherds Bush Families Project (SBFP) is part of the Family Support group of centres that offer a range of experiences for families with children. The project has been at the heart of the local community of Shepherds Bush since 1988. It aims to help families who are homeless, or have other unmet housing needs and suffer social and economic hardship in Shepherds Bush and the wider borough of Hammersmith and Fulham.

For the last 30+ years the project has supported families in hostels, bed and breakfast hotels, and more recently many families in overcrowded and unsuitable accommodation. One parent commented on the project: ‘The Family Project Centre is my second family here. It makes a big difference, I had social support, mental support, physical support, and we can trust Tina and the staff’.

How Shepherds Bush Families Project helps

The project is based in a large hall which gives them the ability to run a warm, friendly, and welcoming drop-in centre where families in need of housing can come for play sessions and to make and meet friends for coffee and a chat. There is also a wide variety of play equipment for children and young people of all ages to enjoy and there are a range of activities specifically for them: ‘It’s not like school, we don’t have to work here, it’s fun’, said one of the girls, aged 8, attending the after-school activities: ‘All the different cultures are together, I like that’.

The project has been receiving funding from John Lyon’s Charity for various areas of their work for several years. They have just started their second three-year grant, which mainly contributes towards core costs, with the flexibility to focus on children and young people where needed. They previously received support from the school holiday fund to fund trips during the holidays: ‘When we were receiving it, it was great and filled a funding gap for trips and activities during the long summer holidays’.

SBFP takes a holistic approach to the support they offer families which has been developed out of feedback from drop-in sessions. They discovered that many families were staying in the local park for much of the day and often until very late, as they did not want to go home where space was limited and where they felt demoralised. Today, one of the centre’s offers is an evening session once a week for all the families to share a meal. The parents help to cook, and some of the young people have taken on helping with the cooking and serving the food as well, giving them a sense of belonging.

The project has a comprehensive offering for the whole family, with parent and child drop-in, pre-school provision for 1-5 year olds, after school clubs for 5-16 year olds, holiday provision with activities on and off-site, parent and infant group, toy and book library, one-to-one advice and advocacy service, and therapeutic counselling to help parents and children who have suffered trauma.

Shepherds Bush Families Project has a voice, but if organisations such as John Lyon’s Charity help to amplify their voice on issues that affect families, and put them in touch with different sources of support, this would go a long way in helping to influence government policy.

How the need has changed and what funding from John Lyon’s Charity has enabled them to do?

The CEO explained that the needs of the families have changed over the years, with more parents now being pushed into work earlier when their children are even as young as 2. Not everybody wants to leave their children with strangers or people they do not know that well, and so the project has seen a higher need for childcare, in particular during the last two years since the roll-out of Universal Credit.

The contribution from John Lyon’s Charity has been vital in enabling the project to continue to meet the needs of families and, in particular, help them to respond to these changes. The flexibility to use the funding to support not only core costs means that they can do more, especially in the school holidays. For example, there is an art table at every session, table top games and a games console. Members of staff describe how the children love the art and craft and that it is so important for the project to be able to have the resources, without saying to them, ‘You can’t use more than two pieces of paper, sorry!’ Funding from the Charity has contributed towards the Centre having another worker in the after school club and sessions.

John Lyon’s Charity has ‘definitely made a difference to what we do because if we hadn’t had that funding, we wouldn’t have been able to do half of what we’ve done, Such as take them to places they may not go and show them that there are different things they can do. It’s not all about going to theme parks, we

might take them to one of the local parks where they can actually get on a bus and go with their parents. And we’ve done a few trips with the parents as well’.

One of the parents added: ‘We cannot offer the children holidays or days out. But here we can go on trips. We share food, we share, it’s amazing. You feel like you are with your family. It’s hard – we are not with and miss our families, but coming here it’s like recovering your family’.

The advice and guidance offered by John Lyon’s Charity has also given SBFP the confidence to apply for a further grant: ‘They have been very supportive in advising us in the best opportunities to go for, rather than just waiting for me to put in the application. It feels that they take a real interest in the work that we’re doing, as well as just giving us a grant’.

Looking forward, how can John Lyon’s Charity help?

Much of the work at the centre is based on making relationships with families and bringing people together. As part of this, they are looking to expand on the partnerships they have with other organisations to enable them to provide a wider range of opportunities. One of the things they would like to offer is more English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes for parents and more support to help parents back to work, through workshops on CV writing and IT skills.



What does this mean for John Lyon's Charity?

Discussion with grantees during the review suggests three main ways that John Lyon's Charity might support this Programme Area going forward:

1. **Champion long-term core funding alongside a relational approach.** This has enabled organisations to adapt and respond to the needs of families in their communities and to weather the storm of government cuts and changing priorities. There is significant appetite among grantees for the Charity to champion a way of working that is flexible, relational, proportionate and responsive, takes risks and recognises the importance of core funding.
2. **Support practice among grantees.** The Charity's knowledge about the operating environment and its overview of specific boroughs or thematic issues is seen as placing them in a position to detect and flag emerging issues. Grantees were keen for the Charity to use this perspective, but in a way that is mindful of the perspectives and expertise of charities wherever possible: *'There's power and clout there which they need to be aware of and use appropriately'*.

The Charity is also valued for convening grantees but could do more to support *'purposeful networking'*. For example, grantees were keen to have opportunities to meet cross-sector partners (funders and local authority representatives) around particular issues. This role might also extend to coordinating with other funders in a specific location. This could help to increase alignment and clarity for voluntary organisations, so that they can understand how different funders 'fit' together and where there are opportunities. Frequent references were made to the Charity's stable commitment in contrast to other funders who change focus each strategic period: *'It's very unhelpful when strategy and themes suddenly change and you're left with a looming gap in the finances'*.

3. **Provide a platform to amplify the voice of grantees on issues affecting families.** Grantees felt that John Lyon's Charity could add value by convening grantees around thematic issues or the operation of charities (i.e. Universal Credit or General Data Protection Regulation reforms), gathering top-line evidence on specific needs for each borough; profiling the experience and view of grantees: *'Help us have a collective voice'*.

Youth Clubs and Youth Activities

Analysis of the context surrounding this Programme Area and data collected from grantees reiterated that the development of young people is essential for the future wellbeing of society. While family life and formal education provide key building blocks, there is also a crucial role for informal learning and development. This is particularly important for young people whose needs are not met through home or school life. Youth clubs and activities provide safe spaces for young people to enjoy themselves and build relationships with their peers and with youth workers. The diverse range of activities (e.g. sport, music, arts, crafts, cookery, skills development and employment support) provided by youth clubs and others, give young people the opportunity to develop important social and life skills. This has positive outcomes for wider society, including employability, community cohesion and active citizenship.

What is happening in the operating environment?

In recent years, public policy around youth issues has tended to focus on two major themes – supporting youth social action¹¹ and tackling youth violence through gang or knife crime strategies. In London, the value of youth services has recently featured in such debates; the Mayor of London's Knife Crime Strategy 2017¹² states that 'youth provision, after school programmes and summer activities are absolutely critical to dealing with some of the factors such as poverty, unemployment and educational failure that give rise to young people who are vulnerable to becoming exposed and lured into various forms of criminality'. The strategy recognises the important role played by youth services in local communities, while also highlighting the cuts in funding that have drastically reduced this type of provision and calls on national government to increase funding for youth services.

As a result, over recent years, local authority funding of youth clubs and youth activities has also declined rapidly. In particular, funding for the core costs of youth clubs and youth activities has drastically reduced. Across London, local youth service budgets dropped by 46% between 2011/12 and 2018/19, with 29 London councils having cut a combined £26.3 million.¹³ John Lyon's Charity grant data indicates that, as well as experiencing funding cuts, voluntary sector youth centres have also seen reduced in-kind support from local councils (e.g. DBS checks, free training for youth workers, AQA accreditation). See Figure 2 for cuts to the Charity's area of benefit.

Youth clubs and youth activities are not always seen as a priority. As non-statutory services, local authorities are not obliged to maintain them. Local authorities also tend to prioritise services that target interventions for those most in need. Youth clubs and youth activities are generally open access and service users are not necessarily classified as high need.

Funding that is still available tends to be short-term and project-based, which can be an unstable and insecure source of funding for an organisation. As with the Children and Families programme, a recurrent theme here is the lack of funding for preventative provision. Organisations involved in this review described the challenges that this can create for those seeking to maintain consistent provision for young people:

Figure 2 Youth services budgets¹⁴

Borough	Budget 2011/12 £	Budget 2018/19 £	% change
Barnet	1,492,415	1,342,524	-10%
Brent	1,566,243*	1,335,000	-15%
Camden	3,185,398	2,552,289	-20%
Ealing	1,424,707	781,830	-45%
Hammersmith & Fulham/Kensington & Chelsea*	3,847,000	3,348,155	-5%
Harrow ¹⁶	474,186	1,502,380	+217%
Westminster	1,494,990	75,000	-95%

*{2012/13}

*reported jointly until 2015/16¹⁵

'Intervention and time supporting young people can take years. Even three years funding still seems short.'

'Money is put towards interventions rather than prevention – it takes an emergency like the knife violence crisis for government to respond.'

'[Money is] missing smaller pockets where there are less significant issues but still a need for funding.'

With these funding shifts, there have been corresponding changes to provision. London has lost 40% of its youth centres since 2011¹⁷ – at least 100 centres have closed. More than 560 youth workers have lost their jobs¹⁸ and youth organisations described to us the challenges they face recruiting and retaining staff with relevant experience and training. In the face of reduced budgets, local authority children and young people services have tended to move away from open access provision based in youth centres towards targeted youth work and detached outreach functions. One organisation mentioned that with drastic national cuts to youth services, partnership within the field of youth work is vital now and mentioned that 'Young People's Foundations (YPFs)¹⁹ are critical for the future'.

For those youth clubs and service providers surviving, the challenges of maintaining quality provision are substantial, including:²⁰

- Funding and sustainability
- Workforce recruitment and development (paying staff; training staff and volunteers)
- Managing data and demonstrating impact
- Having a voice and influencing policy
- Accessing networking and collaboration opportunities.

However, we also heard of possible opportunities on the horizon. For example:

- The All-Party Parliamentary Group on Youth Affairs, 'Youth Work Inquiry' (April 2019)²¹ calls for greater investment in youth services and recommends more research into the impact of youth work and how it can be adapted to meet modern needs. It also recommends placing youth services under the Department of Education and making youth services subject to Ofsted reviews to improve quality and consistency of provision.
- The 2018/19 London Assembly budget, in which the Mayor of London created a new £45 million, three-year, Young Londoners Fund, providing funding for London's youth work sector.

Grantees in this review also highlighted the importance of articulating and demonstrating the value of youth work in supporting children and young people.

The contribution of John Lyon's Charity's to Youth Clubs and Activities

Since 2009, John Lyon's Charity has invested a total of £10 million into youth clubs and youth activities in its boroughs. Growing need has seen a responding increase in JLC funding, with the annual value of grants rising to £1.6 million in 2017. Within the timeframe for the review, 121 organisations have benefited under the Youth Clubs and Youth Activities programme, providing activities for young people outside the school setting, and universal access to youth clubs and youth activities.

Grantees talked about being enabled to respond to the needs that they see – and hear – from young people, for example: 'A safe place to be', 'Positive role models', 'Relationships – a second home', 'Somewhere to develop aspirations and ideas about the future'. Organisations funded by the Charity have been able to maintain and provide services and support in response to these needs:

- Creating safe spaces: 'We are the safe space, we're there for young people'.
- Empowering young people to make better life choices, improve their lifestyle and build their aspirations.
- Providing 'wraparound' services that put young people at the centre – bringing together services to best support their needs – including focusing on building community and intergenerational support. Examples of organisations working in partnership to manage influx of complex referrals.
- Creating fun opportunities for young people (co-designed with young people).
- Support to target specific issues such as the rise in mental health problems and growing homelessness among young people.

We heard of the value of the Charity's consistent support to the youth sector, alongside a willingness to discuss and respond to emerging issues:

'If something happens, they pick up the phone and work a way to sort it out, they don't pick up the phone and ask to be on the telly or in the media.'

'They do it by doing the doing, not by shouting about it.'

'They have a real desire to change things for the good.'

Young People's Foundations were given as an example of this, being seen as the Charity's response to loss of profile and funding for local youth support/work. However, grantees also flagged the importance of these organisations not 'crowding out' smaller providers.

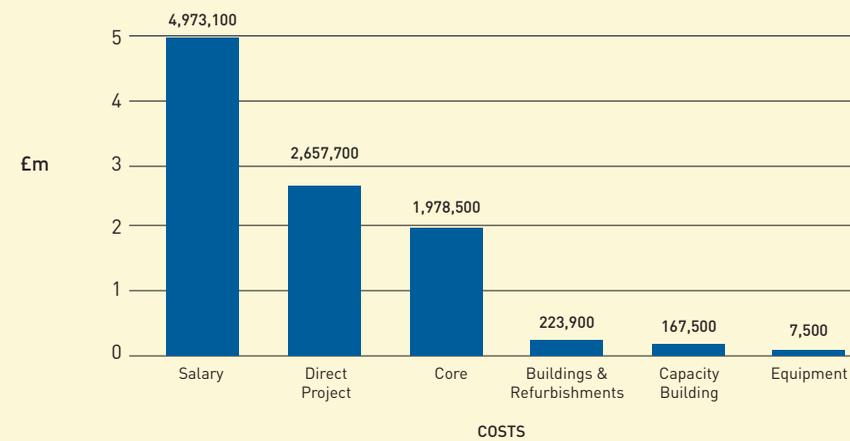
John Lyon's Charity has enabled grantees to continue providing quality youth work – despite decreased funding and attention to this area nationally and locally. Through a combination of core funding and an engaged relationship with the Charity's Grants Managers, organisations have managed to develop creative opportunities for young people and to take appropriate risk:

'They expect us to think differently, not everything is tried and tested, so they accept failure and they expect us to take risk sometimes. This is different to other funders.'

In some cases, John Lyon's Charity funding has enabled organisations to expand their provision of youth activities, for example: 'Friday evening we do cooking with the boys, so that's to encourage them with healthy eating. So we're doing a lot. We were lucky to employ a youth worker 10 hours a week to deliver, and that was JLC's funding, which is luckily for three years but it doesn't go very far'.

As government and local authority funding has been cut, the Charity's grants to cover core costs and

Figure 3 Youth and Youth Clubs – type of grant



salaries have helped to ensure that services are maintained (see Figure 3). For example, between 2009 and 2018 approximately 70% of JLC’s funding in this Programme Area has gone towards salary and core costs. In particular, this has meant that youth clubs can continue to employ qualified youth workers and senior managers to deliver high quality activities to young people that is responsive to their needs:

‘We have a bank of amazing youth workers; they’re all qualified youth workers. We also have a team of support workers who are actually with us doing their level one youth work qualification ... It’s just like a cool opportunity for young people to get this qualification, and it also means that good quality youth workers are everywhere. It’s something we feel really strongly about; that these young people are next to good youth workers who are good role models who are maybe from the area and are relatable and they get them.’

In some cases, the Charity’s continued support has provided stability and space for organisations to adjust to new circumstances and explore other avenues of funding or pursue quality accreditation.

The Charity’s’ championing and support for good youth work is seen as a unique contribution that has helped increase grantee organisation’s confidence: *‘John Lyon’s Charity has helped us to develop a niche area’*. The focus on quality is seen as *‘driven by the belief in the work and the support for young people’*. Grantees within the youth club and activities Programme Area mentioned that John Lyon’s Charity: *‘Ask for what they need and no more’*; *‘They want the monitoring and evaluation but this is not just stats driven, they really care and want to know that young people have benefited’*. One organisation discussed the challenges associated with measuring the ‘impact’ of youth work: *‘Impact takes time with young people’*, and appreciated the emphasis of John Lyon’s Charity on showing how funding has been used. Again, we heard about the importance of John Lyon’s Charity’s ability to ‘get the essence’ of what organisations do: *‘They are one of the few funding organisations that I feel really know us and understands what we do and how we work’*.

What does this mean for John Lyon’s Charity?

Discussion with grantees during the review suggests three main ways that John Lyon’s Charity might support this Programme Area going forward:

1. **Champion the importance and value of youth work.** Within the current environment of local authority cutbacks, declining provision and the recent findings from the Youth Work inquiry²², John Lyon’s Charity demonstrating their commitment to high quality youth work is a timely contribution to the sector. Grantees would like the Charity to speak up about the important role youth work plays and sees it as having legitimacy to play this role. The Youth Work Inquiry and new Mayoral strategy might be opportunities for doing this. Grantees also noted that the Charity’s membership of London Funders²³ was a potential route to influencing other funders.
2. **Support practice around evidence and quality provision.** Grantees urged John Lyon’s Charity to think about its role to promote high standards in youth work, perhaps thinking about a quality mark: *‘Their role is ensuring the quality of delivery, but they don’t really promote this enough – it should be recognised more’*. Part of this includes supporting the development of a stronger evidence base that might help encourage public policy decision makers to allocate more funds to youth activities. The Charity may wish to contribute to debates around quality assurance and regulation, especially in light of suggestions from the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Youth Affairs that youth clubs and activities should fall under the Ofsted regime.
3. **Provide opportunities to smaller organisations.** Young People’s Foundations were broadly well received by grantees. However, there were some concerns that they may exclude smaller organisations: *‘By funding YPFs, it mustn’t impact on the smaller organisations around it – it’s not “job done”, as there are still lots of organisations who need JLC’s help on the ground. Keep funding small and valuable organisations and don’t allow them to get swallowed up by big organisations’*. Comments were also made about ensuring that programmes are co-designed wherever possible, given JLC’s commitment to supporting small grassroots charities:

‘JLC need to do more groups like this [Focus Group session] to check it’s a bottom up design and to design their thought process with young people and the organisations that will use the tool or YPF.’

Grantees also flagged the importance of the Charity thinking carefully about who to invite to convenings to ensure a wide range of perspectives. There were discussions about how to usefully use the power that JLC holds as a funder to encourage attendance at meetings: *‘These meetups should be compulsory rather than an open invitation – this will get the right people round the table to discuss specific themes’*.

The Avenues Youth Project

What they do

The Avenues is an out of school hours youth project based in North Westminster with an open door policy for young people aged 8-18 living and working in the area: *'We're always here. Whether they've had the worst day in school ever, the biggest row with their girlfriend or mum, it doesn't matter in The Avenues. When you come through the door, you'll always find an adult who will help you.'* (The Avenues Operations Manager)

Established in 1979 in recognition of the lack of facilities for young Afro-Caribbean people in the area, the youth project now welcomes a wide range of young people from the many communities that make up Queen's Park and Westminster. Originally, the centre was run out of a tiny hall but twelve years ago the current centre was built: *'It's a purpose-built youth centre. Upstairs we've got a recording studio, a radio station and a dance studio; we've also got a full commercial kitchen, a multi-purpose space, arts and crafts room, a computer space, and a multi-function room.'*



What their young people really need

Members of staff at The Avenues outlined their organisational purpose: *'The Avenues gives young people a sense of routine and they know that every day they come in here from 3.30pm until 6pm and that is something that is guaranteed. Our vision is to build up a sense of resilience and belonging from a young age and build something that the young people can rely on. It might not be the sandwich at 3.30pm that they lust after, but the sense of reliability within it, or the sense that they know that that's going to happen.'*

'There's a structure to it. We have no idea what goes on outside, and to some extent it doesn't matter to us because when you come through the door we treat everybody exactly the same. We want to level the playing fields and give everybody the same opportunity. We don't know what their family life is like; we don't know what their school is like; we don't know their living situation; we don't know their history. But we do know that when they come through these doors they're treated exactly the same as everyone else.'

An 11 year old girl who's been going to The Avenues since she was 8 said: *'I like to meet friends here. It's like home, the staff are calm. I tell people to come because it's a good place to go.'*

The Avenues starts at age 8 with an after-school club that looks to build resilience and help the children to feel confident in themselves. The youth workers at the centre aim to build trusting adult relationships that increase their resilience when they are outside of The Avenues. They believe that success is when a young person is in a situation where they could choose one path or the other, and a little voice in their head might give them the bravery to say: *'I'm going to go in that direction actually and not do this and that and not involve myself in this and do that instead'*.

How the world around them has changed, what that means, and what funding from John Lyon's Charity has enabled them to do

A great deal has changed in the last twelve years in terms of what it means to be a young person. Twelve years ago, The Avenues had a significant focus on their recording studio; now everything is digitalised and moving towards social media.

An 18-year-old commented: *'I've been coming since I was young ... now I'm a staff member. I was a volunteer before, now I work in the recording studio and other things'*.

As with other youth projects, funding is a continual issue and one that has seen several local centres close their doors. It is thanks to an incredible group of supporters that the centre has been able to keep their doors open and extend their services, whether that is through financial giving or by running workshops and donating time. Grants from organisations such as JLC play a crucial part in this, enabling The Avenues to plan for the future and reach more young people.

One member of staff commented: *'If we don't give these young people exciting and new things to do, they'll stop coming. It's voluntary. So we want to grow and become bigger and shout louder. JLC has been incredible in funding us for the past three years. It's absolutely invaluable. When we say to funders it's invaluable, it really is. We don't have any other stream of funding, so it is truly a matter of if they didn't fund it, we wouldn't run.'*

Although The Avenues is currently fighting hard to keep their doors open, they have not lost sight of the bigger picture of being there for the young people when they need it and in ways that they need it. For example, if attendance seems low, the youth workers go and find young people on the stairwell, chatting, listening and encouraging them to come along to The Avenues: *'It's about understanding what young people want and that we're here for them'*.

A couple of the younger children (8 and 9 year old girls) doing arts and crafts at the centre said: *'We love the computer because don't have one at home. We're going to do a radio show ... about slime. Slime is the best thing about the centre. If not slime, then the staff'*.

Throughout the time the centre has been open, the mission has remained the same: to provide activities and opportunities for young people in the area that they might not otherwise have. A staff member commented: *'We don't mind where you've come from, we don't mind your background, we don't mind your postcode, but when you are here we want to provide as many opportunities for you as possible. So, in the future, this has been like your second home, and when you think about where you want to be, or if you feel a bit lost and you're not sure what direction you want to go to, you know you've had these roots'*.

Emotional Wellbeing

The Charity's grantees explored the importance of emotional wellbeing in young people's lives. Good mental health is a key factor in the successful development of children and young people and increases resilience over the individual's lifetime. However, a child's mental wellbeing can be affected by home life, bullying, academic expectation, financial pressures or other things happening in their lives. Poor mental health can subsequently have a negative impact on a young person's education.

Emotional wellbeing is 'associated with feeling good about oneself, self-esteem, being aware of one's own and other people's emotions and, in particular, being able to regulate one's own'.²⁴ The development of emotional wellbeing is, therefore, thought to contribute to an individual's ability to function in society and meet the demands of everyday life.

What is happening in the operating environment?

Children and young people's mental health is of growing concern to policy makers and practitioners alike. Over the last two decades the proportion of children and young people with mental health difficulties has increased six fold – from 0.8% in 1995 to 4.8% in 2014.²⁵ In 2017, emotional disorders were the most common type of disorder experienced by 5 to 19-year-olds.²⁶

In light of these needs, mental health is now a significant policy priority for Government, which recently stated that it wants to achieve 'parity of esteem' between mental and physical health.²⁷ Mental health is a top priority in the NHS Long-Term Plan, with a specific commitment to increasing funding for children and young people's mental health.²⁸ The Department of Health and Social Care confirmed this commitment with a rise in funding aimed at giving 70,000 more children a year access to specialist mental health care by 2020/21.²⁹

Current service provision for mental health through the NHS tends to be targeted towards individuals with higher needs, delivered through Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). Government spending here increased in 2015, with an extra £1.4 billion allocated to CAMHS between 2015 and 2020.

So, while children's mental health is a top priority for the Government and the NHS, the strategy is largely based around supporting the treatment of individuals with high needs. Grantees in this review raised concerns about this, stressing that successfully supporting mental health requires both specialist care and early intervention strategies that can assist children with low-level mental health problems. Again, echoing the findings from the Programme Areas discussed so far, we heard concerns that early intervention strategies are being ignored.

Children's mental health services are not, however, just a matter of NHS funding. Effective provision and resource allocation is also the responsibility of local authorities. There are concerns in the field that, in the face of budget pressures, children's services budgets are massively constrained and resources are therefore targeted at those with the greatest need. Concerns have been raised that some central government money for NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) may, in practice, be used to backfill local authority cuts.³⁰

A report by the Children's Commissioner for England in April 2019, revealed that although the total spend on low-level mental health services increased in 2018/19, there is still wide variance in how much each local authority allocates to supporting children and young people in this way.³¹ For example, the top quartile of local authority areas spend five times more than the bottom quartile. This has led to criticisms that access to low level mental health services for children has become a postcode lottery. However, London boroughs appear to be faring relatively well. In 2019, local authority and CCG spending per child in London was £17.88, among one of the highest rates in the country.³²

In addition, while funding for CAMHS has increased in recent years, there is a growing crisis in terms of ability to access the services. This is because the availability of services has failed to keep pace with demand. CAMHS are often in the position whereby they have to impose restrictions and thresholds on children and young people accessing their services to enable them to meet the needs of young people during a time of financial cuts.³³ This often means that unless a child's case is sufficiently severe, they may not be able to access the service. Waiting times to access CAMHS can also be long. Both of these factors can contribute to deterioration in a child's mental health while waiting for support.³⁴

Within this context of: rising mental health needs; lack of early intervention funding or support for low-level needs; and patchy local provision, schools are struggling to adequately support their young people. Teachers report increasing signs of mental health problems among pupils.³⁵ Low-level mental health support services are typically delivered through schools and have been particularly affected by budget cuts. Despite research suggesting that low level schemes such as school-based counselling and drop-in centres can prevent the need for intensive, specialist intervention, these kinds of schemes are often limited or unavailable, with provision dependent on the local area priorities and the resources made available by the local authority.

What difference has John Lyon's Charity made?

Between 2009 and 2018, John Lyon's Charity made 93 grants totalling £6.3 million to support emotional wellbeing. More than half of this was granted in the last four years, reflecting the recent rapid growth in needs described earlier (see Figure 4).

In particular, John Lyon's Charity has supported interventions that address the complex issues faced by children and young people but that fall outside the remit of CAMHS. These are commonly awarded as Schools in Partnership grants, where funding is provided to a cluster of schools to collectively 'buy-in'

Figure 4 Emotional Wellbeing – grants by start date



an appropriate service. As noted earlier, the importance of low-level accessible mental health support is crucial. From 2009 to 2018, the Charity has supported organisations to provide:

- Drop-in services (e.g. at school lunchtimes)
- Counselling and therapy services (individual or group), using a range of different techniques (e.g. play therapy, mindfulness, equine therapy, arts based therapy)
- Support to parents and carers
- Training of school staff.

These kinds of services were seen by many grantees to be effective in supporting low-level mental health needs and preventing the need to access acute services further down the line.

John Lyon's Charity has also been committed to supporting the quality of mental health and emotional wellbeing support - funding high quality services, both specialist and non-specialist. Grants given have focused on supporting services that are delivered by qualified practitioners within a school or a dedicated setting, reflected in the scale of grants – typically in the range of £40,000 to £100,000, with few small grants awarded.

This has enabled organisations to deliver high-quality interventions for their children and young people, while also creating leverage for other funding sources. John Lyon's Charity was described as having a 'multiplying effect', in that its support has drawn attention to the importance of emotional wellbeing support but also – importantly – the need for high quality services:

'Their approach enables long-term benefits to be seen – they are not just First Aid.'

'It has encouraged us to reach out to young people in the community rather than simply expecting them to come to us.'

Grantees outlined three important features of effective support for children and young people's wellbeing:

- Focusing on the whole child and/or whole school, including family members and staff
- Adopting a collaborative approach and involving young people in decision-making processes
- Releasing emotional blocks to learning, so that young people can access the curriculum.

Given the current climate of limited available funds, many grantees have had to diversify their funding streams and are 'continuously scouting the horizon for funding'. The variability in local provision for mental health resources was described by one organisation, which went from working with three schools that were 100% funded by the local authority, to just one school being 100% funded: 'Most schools are in deficit'. We also heard examples of parents, community members and charities becoming involved in fundraising or campaigning for schools to support the emotional wellbeing of students.

Grantees highlighted JLC's commitment to helping them to think flexibility and strategically about possible future directions and being responsive to changing local needs:

'They have enabled us to continue to deliver our core services at challenging times.'

'They enabled services to become embedded and established and really make a change.'

Embedding emotional wellbeing support into schools was seen as a necessary transition and part of effective provision. This was made more likely with three year grants from the Charity which were believed to help embed changes to practice and build the relationships required to exert influence. One grantee explained how John Lyon's Charity has enabled schools they support to work with young people

with less acute needs, as well as children with more complex needs. This is an example of the value of preventative support embedded within schools. John Lyon's Charity has helped organisations, such as the Schools Counselling Partnership (see page 28) to broker relationships with schools and to develop new models and approaches to work within the field of emotional wellbeing.

An additional challenge that grantees are currently facing is that of providing evidence and measuring impact. This was described as a necessary tool to influence various stakeholders about their work and young people's need for emotional wellbeing support.

What does this mean for John Lyon's Charity?

Discussion with grantees during the review suggests three main ways that John Lyon's Charity might support this Programme Area going forward:

1. **Champion the importance of tailored, young person-centred support provision.** Specialist services are an essential part of supporting children and young people's emotional wellbeing. However, the policy and practice context highlights the importance of balance in order to accommodate varying individual needs. Specialist services can provide support for acute and complex needs of young people but this must be alongside provision of support for individuals with less complex needs. Grantees flagged the importance of funding both specialist and general support in order to enable a person-centred approach, whereby a young person with complex needs may actually respond better to more generalist support.

The Charity could act as a champion for the importance of this balance within its own funding portfolio, as well as raising awareness to other funders, involving grantees in these discussions: *'JLC can highlight the challenges within the emotional wellbeing sector from the viewpoint of family, parents, school teachers, counsellors, based on evidence from the work done by grassroots organisations that they fund'*.
2. **Support meaningful partnership working in emotional wellbeing.** Within the field of emotional wellbeing, individual organisations often have *'different views, approaches, priorities and schools of thought'*. Partnerships within this Programme Area can sometimes be complicated and require significant time and resources. This can be a challenge for small organisations that may lack the capacity to invest sufficient time to create meaningful and purposeful partnerships. Grantees made a suggestion for funders to remain mindful of when partnership work can be transformative, but also being cautious not to place additional demands on smaller charities. The Charity could play a role in sharing 'good practice' from across the field and convening more opportunities for organisations to network and, where appropriate, initiate partnerships themselves.
3. **Provide funding and 'hand-over' for successful exit.** It was recognised that the Charity's focus on emotional wellbeing had increased in response to need but that this might change in future. In addition, individual grants are always time-limited to some degree. To support exit, organisations would like John Lyon's Charity to highlight the quality of the services they support; make introductions to other funders; and fund longer term to support preparations. An example to draw on when considering how to design and build successful exit strategy into programmes is the approach used by JLC for the Schools in Partnership Fund. The Charity took a deliberate approach to build the capacity and confidence of the partners to work with other schools and funders. Strategies have included matching school contributions or staggering the size of a grant to allow time for other funding to be sought elsewhere.

Schools Counselling Partnership

What they do

Since 2011, the Schools Counselling Partnership (SCP) has specialised in providing a therapeutic counselling service supporting children, schools and families. Their approach is to work with small clusters of local schools that share their experiences and learn from each other to positively improve the life chances of the children they work with. An initial grant in 2011 from John Lyon's Charity enabled SCP to work in five schools within the Ealing area. JLC are currently the main funder of the schools within this partnership, supporting clusters in Ealing and Harrow, with SCP looking to extend this to Tower Hamlets, where they also work with Islamic Relief.

Each school within the cluster is able to access one-to-one support for pupils (delivered by either volunteer therapists in their final year of training or newly qualified therapists), lunchtime drop-in for pupils, support for parents and carers (one-to-one support and a weekly drop-in), support for staff (a weekly drop-in and on-going support) and training for school staff. This holistic approach is unique to SCP.

“There’s a consistency which is really helpful to the children but also the staff and parents, who feel that they are benefitting from it themselves too if needed.”

SCP’s Counselling Services Manager



How the School Counselling Partnership helps

SCP looks at each child’s attachment style to try to understand their inner world and help them make sense of it. While doing this, they also offer advice, emotional support and strategies to those around them, so that everyone can support the child. By working in clusters of local schools, an idea that arose from discussions with JLC, SCP has found that the schools can learn from each other and see what works or what does not work locally. Pastoral care and the costs of the service can also be shared.

The SCP service promotes the idea that ‘it’s good to talk’, ‘it’s okay not to be okay’ and ‘it’s okay to ask for help’. It is designed to grow and move with children as they go into secondary school, a transition that can be really challenging for many young people as well as their parents. SCP hopes that a familiar face and place, where they know they can seek support, makes this journey easier.

Some of the children who attend SCP ‘Space’ sessions described how it helps: ‘By sharing worries with someone it helps the worries to go away and you feel better’, ‘If we didn’t have Space we would be full of worries’ and ‘If you don’t talk to someone it doesn’t get sorted’.

Another initiative that has proved successful was the introduction of mum and baby sessions, where children can observe the relationship between a mother and her baby and learn from it. Research has shown that this ‘baby watching’ can reduce aggression and anxiety and promote language skills, self-esteem and self-confidence. SCP’s CEO has seen a real change from these sessions, with ‘a little boy who never spoke in school, who then through baby watching started to talk. We’ve also seen really aggressive boys suddenly behaving really well and a boy that was in foster care who hugged his foster carer for the first time following his sessions’.

How the need has changed and what funding from John Lyon’s Charity has enabled the schools within this partnership to do?

Funding from JLC for schools in this partnership was initially for three years. However, when schools lost their government grants and SCP’s services had to be self-funded, JLC stepped in: ‘They recognised the work that we’ve been doing and I think they just didn’t want it to stop. They’ve been amazing and we wouldn’t be here without them’ (SCP’s CEO).

Early on in SCP’s journey, they recognised that services they delivered in partnership schools would also be beneficial to other schools, so they asked JLC for a

grant to enable them to offer this training. This was approved for two years and carried out through the Ealing Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Teachers Service. The training was free for the teachers and was warmly received.

More recently, SCP have introduced staff wellbeing hubs, including mindfulness. The addition of bereavement training came out of a growing need across all of the partnership schools. This has now been incorporated into their provision package. Without the support of JLC, the partnership would not have had the flexibility to react and develop additional services.

The need for SCP in schools continues to grow as more and more school staff are being cut, making it harder to provide the support internally. Even if SCP can only be in a school once a week, they are able to make a difference. For example, in one school a year six child who had only started coming quite recently, but who was extremely shy, was able to speak about their feelings in the room because it was somewhere they felt safe.

The regular reports back to JLC clearly show the benefit the funds are having. When the SCP is looking to implement new strategies, or improve the team supporting children, this open communication between SCP and John Lyon’s Charity is beneficial for both parties. Representatives from JLC are very engaged with the work of the partnership and have attended training sessions and steering meetings at SCP.

Looking forward, how can John Lyon’s Charity help?

Stability of funding is a priority for SCP, especially within the current national financial situation. There is also a growing need to help with the recruitment of trainers and the professional development of individuals that go into schools.

SCP are keen to work on the partnership with JLC, in particular looking at how they can work together for the benefit of both organisations. For example, this year SCP was asked to observe a project JLC was interested in funding. This resilience training project was a good fit for SCP and so JLC put a small grant into an SCP school as a test, so that the other project could deliver the programme. The test was a success and now the organisations are looking at how they can work together in the future.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

In 2018, there were 1.3 million children and young people of school age in the UK with a special educational need and disability (SEND) – 15% of the school age population. Of these, 320,000 had an education, health and care (EHC) plan or a statement of SEND, indicating a more acute form of SEND.³⁶ In London, it is estimated that over 200,000 children and young people have some level of SEND, with 41,000 qualifying for an EHC plan.³⁷ Life outcomes for young people with SEND are often poor; children with special educational needs are almost seven times more likely to be permanently excluded than other pupils.³⁸

What is happening in the operating environment?

Government policy on children and young people with SEND is centred around EHC plans. The EHC plan aims to provide tailored support for children and young people with SEND, bringing together their education, health and social care needs. The number of children and young people with EHC plans has increased by 35% since 2013/14, rising to 320,000 individuals in 2017/18. Children and young people with an EHC plan are automatically entitled to government support. However, there are many children and young people with less severe special educational needs, who fall below the threshold for an EHC plan. Ofsted estimates that around one million pupils have special educational needs but do not have EHC plans and are therefore not in automatic receipt of support.

In recent years, there have been several key changes in the policy and practice environment which are affecting children and young people with SEND, as well as those seeking to support them:

- **More children with complex needs.** More awareness and better diagnoses in recent years means that there are now more children and young people with identifiable needs.⁴¹
- **Children and Families Act 2014.** This presented a new code of SEND practice, which expects all children to receive the best possible education and support.⁴²
- **Current secondary school funding and attainment measures.**⁴³ The schools funding system does not reward schools with a high degree of inclusion. Pressure on mainstream schools means that many do not provide extra support for complex needs.

These factors have contributed to a growing number of young people with SEND needing support.

Inclusion within mainstream schools has been a key policy driver since the introduction of the 1981 Education Act. However, in the face of a growing need for SEND support, many are now questioning the feasibility of this.⁴⁴ Mainstream schooling appears increasingly unable, given financial and attainment pressures, to cater for children with SEND and increasing numbers of children with SEND are being excluded from mainstream schools.

This context has created an increase in demand for places at specialist schools that can cater for children with more complex learning needs (often those with an EHC plan).⁴⁵ Government has responded to this demand by committing more funding for specialist schools – 46% of pupils with a statement of SEND, or an EHC plan, now attend a specialist school.⁴⁶ However, as of 2017/18, 93% of pupils with SEND support needs are still educated in state-funded mainstream schools. The movement away from inclusive education and the limited availability of support represent key policy issues for children and young people with SEND. Wider issues, such as access to leisure activities for children and young people with SEND – while important – tend to receive less policy attention.

The funding of support to children and young people with SEND is a growing concern. Local Government Association research suggests that local authorities face a SEND funding gap of £500 million in 2018/19, with many unable to provide the support children and young people need.⁴⁷ The combination of growing needs and funding constraints mean that many children and young people with SEND are not obtaining the support they need. In 2018, Ofsted described support for children with SEND as 'disjointed and inconsistent'. As a result, the gap in performance and outcomes for children with SEND is widening between different SEND services.⁴⁸

In line with research evidence, grantees highlighted the importance of **participation in leisure activities** as a means of coping with SEND. This can support improvements in mental and physical health, personal and social skills (by creating opportunities for building and maintaining friendships), self-worth and confidence. In addition, this kind of activity can help to break down stereotypes and improve social attitudes towards people with disabilities. Despite this knowledge, people with SEND access leisure facilities and activities at a lower rate than wider society. For example, just 16.8% of people with a learning disability play sport at least once a week, compared with 39.9% of the general population.⁴⁹ This is often due to lack of specialist facilities, or the requirement for larger staff ratios to support individuals with higher needs. This, in turn, increases the cost of provision for children and young people with SEND, so additional funding and support is often needed to enable children and young people with SEND to engage in activities.⁵⁰

In London, we see a similar picture. In 2018, the London Assembly published research on children with SEND,⁵¹ finding:

- London requires thousands of new school places for children with special needs.
- The level of funding to schools for pupils with high needs is insufficient to provide the quality support they need.
- Close working between organisations is needed to support children and young people with SEND, their parents and carers. However, many schools feel they carry most of the burden due to a lack of collaboration between the local authority and the NHS.
- Special Educational Needs Coordinators are under huge pressure – there is a growing responsibility with diminished resources.
- A lack of job opportunities, training and work experience for young people with SEND.

The London Assembly report made a number of recommendations to the Mayor of London, principally around putting pressure on central government to increase funding and provision of support for children and young people with SEND. It also recommended increasing the availability of high quality play spaces for children and young people with SEND and funding initiatives to facilitate journeys on public transport. These findings chime strongly with the experiences of grantees in this review who talked about:

- **Lack of access to transport** to provide links between different activities and programmes for young people with SEND. Limited funding for transport reduces the accessibility and reach of their work. Many organisations are moving away from reliance on one grant and are sourcing alternative income to obtain funding for transport.
- **Creating pathways to support transition of young people beyond adolescence.** There are limited opportunities for further support or employment options for young people after the age of 19.
- **The burden for responding to need is often placed on specialist services rather than challenging mainstream schools to develop more inclusive practices:** *'The emphasis is never on mainstream providers to include young people with a SEN or disability'. This pressure is leading to 'staff exhaustion and low morale' and a 'dispirited workforce'.*

What difference has John Lyon's Charity made?

In the last 10 years, John Lyon's Charity has invested £4.6 million in supporting children and young people with SEND. In practice, this has been a consistent investment of around half a million pounds each year. Funding has primarily focused on project costs that have provided children and young people with SEND access to some of the leisure activities the policy context highlights as so important (see Figure 5).

John Lyon's Charity has funded activities that give young people with SEND the opportunity to try new skills, have greater social interaction and build their confidence. Examples found in our review include: 'celebrating disabled artists in the borough'; offering an integrated family support service and 'giving families strength to face challenges'; raising awareness and reducing stigmas; connecting arts organisations with families that need support; 'embedding inclusive programmes into the rest of our organisation'; 'respecting young people and doing projects with them'; and early intervention work ('not just when there's a crisis, but supporting families with disabled children before any problems escalate').

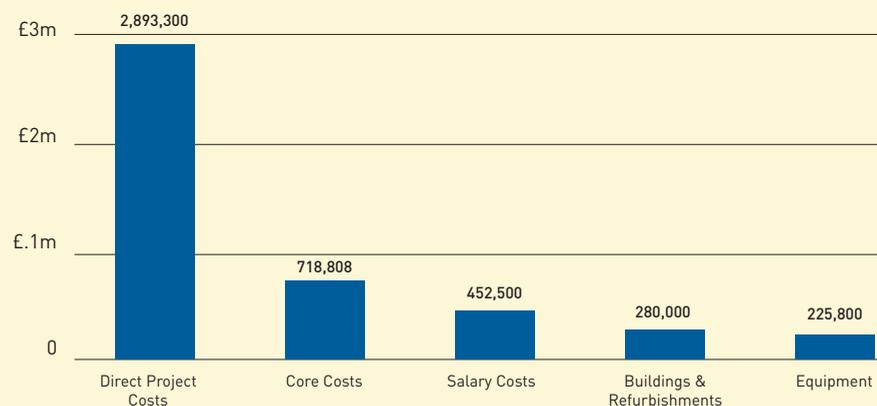
Funded activities typically comprise:

- Providing play, activities and access to leisure facilities for children with SEND.
- Drop-in family support and play/activity events for young children with SEND.
- Providing training to young people with learning disabilities (e.g. vocational training in catering, life skills such as using public transport).

It has also supported specialist provision for young people and families affected by autism; young people with special educational needs who are excluded from school; and activity to help develop pathways to support young people's transition between educational establishments, e.g. between school and further education.

Although many of John Lyon's Charity grants are for services delivered independently by community groups, it was also fairly common for funded projects to involve community groups working in partnership with educational establishments (e.g. specialist schools). Some projects also sought to integrate young people from specialist schools into mainstream schools.

Figure 5 SEND grants type



Across this Programme Area, funded organisations have achieved a range of outcomes for young people, including:

- Increases in social interactions and the development of social skills
- Progress in learning and skills development
- Improved self-confidence
- Support and respite for carers.

One of the primary contributions John Lyon's Charity has made is seen in the Cultural Inclusion Manifesto.⁵² This is an initiative among SEND and arts and culture organisations to produce a statement of intent to work to create more opportunities for children and young people with disabilities to engage with arts and culture. Grantees in the review reflected on 'genuine inclusion' and how to avoid tokenism, instead encouraging representation of disabled people across more levels of institutions and organisations. Grantees felt they shared this value with John Lyon's Charity and had been able to contribute their views through involvement in the Cultural Inclusion Manifesto:

'JLC have helped to bring people together and to have an effect on their practice. This was fairly remarkable!'

'They have an expectation that the arts have to be more inclusive ... we've used their research [Change of Perspectives] which enabled us to secure funding.'

'The Cultural Inclusion Manifesto is changing expectations locally ... there are more opportunities for SEND young people in cultural institutions in the boroughs.'

This work is encouraging a move away from inclusive programmes to instead focus on inclusive practice, which is a values-led approach embedded within an entire organisation.

Two important features of the Charity's approach were raised here as underpinning organisations' achievements:

1. **Trusting organisations to know what is needed:** 'They listen and they trust us'. Organisations described how this approach has enabled more responsive delivery because they trust organisations to do what is directly needed across different communities and to design programmes that can be flexible and responsive to the changing needs of the young people with SEND that they support and work with. The 'Change of Perspectives' research was also cited as an example of this: 'The fact that they're doing this research means something ... it shows an attitude of finding out from their grantees what's working to then spread this across the country to other funders'.
2. **Longer-term funding:** JLC's commitment to longer-term funding has enabled grantees to maintain, grow and leverage funds for their work:

'They stepped in and saved our Project Manager post.'

'[It allowed us to] expand and grow the project and to sustain employees.'

One grantee mentioned how the Charity encouraged them to apply for the maximum grant size:

'They offer expert advice and have said to us "you've undervalued this. You should apply for more money". This makes the project work. We were afraid to ask for what we needed but they encouraged us to apply for more.'

Action on Disability

What they do

Action on Disability is a user-led organisation based in Hammersmith & Fulham that is managed and run by disabled people. Their vision is for an inclusive society where all individuals are equal and free of disabling barriers.

Their mission is to campaign for the rights of disabled people and to influence local and national policy and practice; deliver high quality, accessible activities which promote independent living; and give disabled people the knowledge and confidence about their rights, enabling them to access opportunities, make choices and live independently.

How Action on Disability helps

Supported by funding from John Lyon's Charity, Hammersmith & Fulham Council, and other trust funds, a core part of the service provided by Action on Disability is a range of youth services that helps communities engage with young disabled people without barriers. Action on Disability also provide benefits advice, advocacy support and an employment service for disabled people and their carers.

Much of the work carried out by Action on Disability is aimed at a specialised service for young disabled people, who are able to access a wide range of services and projects that help to expand their horizons and build self-confidence.

These include term-time and holiday projects which engage the young people in several different activities, and social and skill building workshops. They also deliver the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme, a volunteering programme, and a wide variety of performing arts projects.

How the need has changed and what funding from John Lyon's Charity has enabled them to do

However, this range of provision was under threat last year when Action on Disability youth service were two weeks away from considering withdrawing their offer to young people due to a dramatic fall in government funding and an increased demand for their services.

It was then that they approached John Lyon's Charity who responded quickly and granted them core funding for Action on Disability's youth service to last for an initial period of three years. Thanks to this funding, they then secured youth contracts from Hammersmith & Fulham to deliver holiday projects, an after-school club, a youth club, a volunteering programme and the Duke of Edinburgh's Awards scheme.

This was supplemented with additional fundraising and a further grant from John Lyon's Charity for school holiday activities. As part of this, JLC supported a design project which provided young disabled people with practical opportunities to design and build products, such as a birdhouse or a cup holder. The whole process gave them a collective sense of achievement, as well as an individual one that helped to build their confidence and raise their self-esteem.

New projects are following on with a recently secured pilot project through Youth Music and in partnership with Lyric Hammersmith (theatre).

The organisation has changed substantially since it was formed over 40 years ago. The aim then was to ensure that there was a service for young disabled people, but now the focus is on young disabled people being able to access mainstream provision, as opposed to segregated provision.

Looking to the future and how John Lyon's Charity can help

In the next few years, the CEO of Action on Disability anticipates that their needs will change, whether it is through changes to family situations, government and the impact of Brexit, or a change in funding channels. However, they are currently fortunate to be one of the few organisations that receive support from Hammersmith & Fulham Council. Alongside this, the relationship with and funding from JLC has been essential in helping them to manage their services effectively and ensure that the assessments of co-production are addressed.

A member of Action on Disability commented that over the next few years, Action on Disability needs to make sure it has the resources in place in order to meet any challenges: 'It's about making sure that we're able to keep going and we're able to move forward in the right direction. It is different, it's a different culture and different thinking.'

They are also working on empowering the families, and, in particular, the young people, that come to them to ensure their voice is heard, that they can have an influence on society, and that they are aware of their rights and how to get the support that they need.

In an ideal world, Action on Disability believes that it should not exist and that disability services should not exist – they should be expected as part of mainstream society: 'The way we work is towards the social model of disability, and that's something that JLC has always supported, which is great, instead of the medical model of disability.'

There are always opportunities to create partnerships, especially in the Youth Service, and this is something that JLC could help with through their relationships with other organisations and by offering networking opportunities. It is wonderful to see that they have agreed to support the local Young Hammersmith & Fulham Foundation, which has responded by bringing together local youth providers and opportunities. Part of Action on Disability's vision is to build a society where young disabled people are involved in all parts of the community, and, with the support of core funders such as John Lyon's Charity, this could become a reality.

A good example of this in action is the partnership with The Lyric Hammersmith: 'Before the partnership started, the numbers of young disabled people accessing activities at the Lyric would have been minimal, whereas now it is very normal for our young disabled people to have the opportunity and confidence to access projects at The Lyric.'

Other opportunities that the organisation would love to explore include setting up similar provision in Harrow or Hounslow where there is a large gap in services for people with a disability.

'We've got young people that come here and they're quiet as a mouse and don't always engage in all of our activities or workshops, but they say it's just being here that they enjoy, just being there in that environment where you have the opportunity to socialise if you want – someone can ask how your day is. You might just have a two-minute conversation, but it's just being in that environment, that's good for them and it works for them.'

Youth Coordinator



What does this mean for John Lyon's Charity?

Discussion with grantees during the review suggests three main ways that John Lyon's Charity might support this Programme Area going forward:

1. **Champion an inclusive approach to SEND** and articulate JLC's implicit principles about the values underpinning the organisations that they fund. Continuing what is seen as great work in this area, grantees talked about: 'JLC becoming a quality mark funder for SEND'. Further to this, showcasing their work and demonstrating examples of what genuine inclusion looks like was seen as an insightful contribution for the sector and will continue momentum from their in-depth 'Change of Perspectives'⁵³ research, notably the section on 'Inclusive Practice'. Identifying the key features of conducive environments for inclusive practice across all sectors was seen as a hugely valuable aspect of JLC's research. Grantees wondered if JLC could do more to involve people with lived experience in their strategy and decision-making processes, or at least make it clear that they only fund organisations that have an element of user voice or involvement.
2. **Support grantees to share and learn together.** Sharing information, evidence and resources, and connecting grantees with each other around a particular issue was seen as a valuable aspect of the Charity's work to continue in the field of SEND, especially within the current operating environment of limited resources and funding cuts. Grantees would like more opportunities to do this and mentioned the benefit of making cross-area connections at the review focus groups.
3. **Provide funding that supports small voluntary organisations to continue delivering SEND services.** 'There's a threat to local delivery and smaller organisations – they need to be protected and not threatened by big national charities'. JLC should remain mindful of and continue to provide essential funding to small voluntary organisations that are filling gaps and offering vital and unique services for individuals with SEND and communities across London.

Education and Learning

This research has reviewed the value of education and learning in young people's lives. Education can help to raise aspirations, provide opportunities and improve personal lives. A good education has benefits including reduced poverty, better health, increased income, and reduced crime. In the UK, there is a long-standing link between poverty and poor educational outcomes. Despite overall attainment increasing, there remains an attainment gap between pupils from richer and poorer backgrounds.⁵⁴ Breaking the complex link between poverty and poor educational attainment remains an important but difficult goal.⁵⁵

Extracurricular learning activities and supplementary schools offer educational opportunities for children and young people outside mainstream school provision and play a part in breaking the link between educational attainment and poverty.⁵⁶ They have the potential to raise the attainment of children and young people by providing different learning opportunities. Mainstream schooling does not suit every child. Extracurricular activities have the potential to inspire these young people and provide opportunities to learn and develop new skills within a different environment. In England, supplementary schools increasingly provide these kinds of learning opportunities, in both national curriculum subjects and wider activities, such as sport, music, dance and drama. There are an estimated 3,000-5,000 such schools in England.⁵⁷ Supplementary school pupils tend to do well in comparison to their peer groups and this pattern is even stronger when looking at economically disadvantaged pupils. While stronger performance may not be down to the supplementary school alone, there is evidence to suggest that they make a positive contribution.

Summary of the operating environment

Government educational policy is primarily focused on educational attainment, with schools judged by attainment results at various key stage levels, GCSEs and A-Levels. In recent years, parental choice has brought competition into the schools' market and schools have been given greater autonomy to respond to market pressures through 'academisation'.⁵⁸ Within this competitive system, schools are judged on their place within academic performance league tables.

Supplementary schools and the provision of learning opportunities outside mainstream school settings operate outside the Ofsted quality assurance framework, so are often more open to critique. Seeking to respond to these concerns, there is a move within the supplementary schools sector to assure quality, for example, through adopting the National Resource Centre for Supplementary Education's Quality Mark (previously known as the Quality Framework for Supplementary Schools).

As part of the government’s commitment to breaking the link between poverty and educational attainment, the pupil premium was introduced in 2011 and remains a key policy initiative. The policy is designed to help disadvantaged pupils of all abilities perform better, and close the gap by providing schools with extra income for each pupil registered as eligible for free school meals.⁵⁹

Government funding of education is focused on mainstream schools’ provision. The funding system has become increasingly complicated and difficult to interpret. While education remains a high government priority, state funded schools have not been able to escape the clutches of financial austerity. The government argues that school budgets have risen in nominal terms, yet rising costs have seen schools come under increasing financial pressure with some now cutting staff to maintain balanced budgets.⁶⁰ There are also reports of schools fundraising for basic school provisions, such as pencils and books.⁶¹

Mainstream schools are cutting their extracurricular staff and pastoral services. Grantees described this as a crisis leading to a lack of support for any child or young person with additional needs or behavioural issues: ‘[There is] no one there to scoop them up’.

Given the competitive environment, schools have a strong incentive to raise attainment levels and make use of any additional resources that help them achieve this. There are, however, some concerns about the safety of some unregulated out-of-school settings. In 2018, the Department for Education sought to help parents identify ‘red flags’ in the safeguarding policies of out-of-school settings.⁶² There have also been some growing concerns about what is being taught in unregulated schools, although this has tended to focus on ‘faith schools’.⁶³

In a constrained funding environment and with pressures to improve attainment levels, some schools are collaborating with other organisations to bring in additional resources. For example, we saw among grantees that some supplementary schools are working in partnership with mainstream schools to deliver Saturday schools from their premises. The provision of additional educational opportunities is also welcomed by many schools (for example, John Lyon’s Charity funded Farms for City Children and Debate Mate) even though they may not have funds to support them. Initiatives that involve voluntary and community groups working in partnership with schools have the major benefit of integrating resources with the school’s specific knowledge of each child’s needs.

What difference has John Lyon’s Charity made?

Education and Learning was JLC’s third largest grants programme over the period 2009-2018, perhaps unsurprising given the breadth of the field. The Charity’s investment in this programme has increased year on year since 2009, reaching a high of £1.9 million granted in 2018. Over the 10 years, £11.7 million has been invested through 243 grants to 167 organisations (see Figure 6).

The majority (around half) of grants have been to educational establishments, including schools and supplementary schools.

In line with the operating environment discussed, the focus here has been on:

- Supporting supplementary schools, including core and tutor costs.
- Funding projects in state schools and colleges of further education that enhance the curriculum and seek to inspire children and young people in learning.
- Providing extracurricular learning activities outside the school day. For example, reading help or projects that allow young people to acquire new skills (e.g. cookery programmes).
- Work to increase parental engagement in education.

Figure 6 Education & Learning Spend 2009-2018



Through the Education and Learning Programme, young people across the nine boroughs have benefited from:

- Saturday schools delivering English, maths and science classes, as well as additional creative activities for children, and sometimes with onsite classes and advice services for parents for whole family engagement.
- Residential trips to engage in learning and developmental activities.
- Supported access to university education among under-represented groups.
- Support for parents from minority groups with understanding and engagement in the UK education system.

Work funded in this programme has aimed to help **break the link between social disadvantage and educational disadvantage**. Grantees shared stories of how John Lyon’s Charity has enabled them to **engage with harder to reach audiences and to narrow the attainment gap**. One organisation has been able to develop and sustain literacy classes that are ‘*helping young people access education whatever their background*’. This work is ‘*engaging young people with education and in some cases saving lives*’. JLC’s funding has enabled one organisation to ‘*deliver a quality service to the vulnerable young people we target at prices which are affordable for the organisations that support them*’.

These activities have led to changes for young people, such as increased confidence to experiment with learning, as well as helping schools to understand how an arts based curriculum can inspire learners.

One of the common threads across grantees in this programme were efforts to **widen participation** and **fill gaps in provision**:

‘The children are able to look forward to regular sessions.’

‘By making funding available, experts are able to develop services to help ‘plug’ the gaps.’

Baraka

What they do

Baraka Community Association is based in North Kensington and provides educational support, field trips, advocacy work and other services to young people and families in West London. They aim to support young people to develop into healthy, socially engaged, confident adults and to increase their educational and employment opportunities. The organisation's work is focused on young people from ethnic minority backgrounds, including the British-Somali community. They also work across three boroughs, offering a parenting programme, an intergenerational project, crime prevention and health and wellbeing initiatives.

Baraka received initial funding for a three year period from John Lyon's Charity towards the end of 2018 which has enabled them to sustain a youth worker role and provide additional services such as half-term and summer activities. In addition, they are currently applying for a further grant, so that they can offer horse-riding for the children affected by the Grenfell Tower fire. Research has shown that children who have experienced trauma, or come from deprived areas gain self-confidence and self-worth when given the chance to ride and care for horses.

Going from strength to strength

Set up in 2000, Baraka initially worked only with boys, offering football and day trips. However, as funding grew, the services expanded in 2008 with sessions for girls, advice clinics and a health promotion for children and their families. Overseas trips were introduced in 2012 with a youth exchange to Sweden where there are a large number of Somali migrants.

Activities within the youth centre have also expanded in the last three years with an additional focus on educational needs to ensure that children are fully supported. Part of this has been the introduction of mentors and volunteers who have been through the British education system, so are well placed to guide the children and help with any cultural misunderstandings. Baraka's programme, Debate Mate, helps the children to overcome misconceptions and integrate better with children and adults from other cultures.

One individual and his family have experienced first-hand the help that Baraka provides. When the family arrived, they knew very little about the culture and English was not their first language: *'We didn't know where to start and the setting was completely different to back home. They helped our children learn English and maths and, on top of that, they involved them in various recreational activities and sports. It helped our children immensely.'* One of the children told their father: *'When I'm here, no one laughs at me, I feel at home and I can perform better.'* The children are now volunteers at Baraka and are mentoring others. Their father mentioned: *'They are giving back to the community, and I'm very happy about that.'*

Opportunities and Challenges

There are more opportunities than challenges at Baraka. However, the main challenges are around funding for services and activities. This will always be a high priority, especially since cuts in funding from local councils have put additional pressure on organisations to fundraise locally and source grants from funders such as JLC.

The director at Baraka describes how during the immediate aftermath of Grenfell, JLC's involvement was crucial: *'The area was inundated with clothing, material, food, water, you name it. But there was a lack of coordination, the Council*

didn't have a plan. All the goods vehicles were going to warehouses which weren't being accessed by those who could help.'

So JLC stepped in and initiated London Funders to screen applicants and ensure the resources were properly distributed. Subsequently, Baraka received an approach from Paul Hamlyn Foundation which enabled them to send families affected by Grenfell to Butlins for short breaks. Baraka's Director believes it was the knowledge of Baraka among senior staff at John Lyon's Charity that helped with this.

How John Lyon's Charity helped Baraka

JLC has a range of assets that have helped Baraka grow as an organisation. In particular, it has benefited from networking and support through Young People's Foundations which have brought them into contact with other charities in the area to share ideas and resources.

Funding is a key benefit. The current three year major grant from JLC, in place since December 2018, has helped significantly with the administration of activities and enabled Baraka to concentrate on its services: *'It helps us to become more resilient and we now have more robust systems in terms of looking, monitoring, evaluation and also fundraising.'* The Director believes that what makes JLC different from other funders is the 'listening ear', enabling you to build a relationship where they know you, and you know them. This relationship helped Baraka to attract other funding: *'Our success*

rate went up as soon as we got that support from JLC; they share information and talk about the groups they fund and the good that they're doing which I believe helped with the Paul Hamlyn and Kensington Foundation grants.'

Over the last eight years Baraka has also accessed JLC holiday funding: *'It's not a lot of money but it's something tangible, and means the children can go on day trips to farms, Legoland, Chessington [Zoo] or even on a short residential trip which is all covered by JLC.'*

Indirectly, through the Westway Trust, JLC has also been instrumental in helping with educational classes run at the centre. Westway oversees the educational element at Baraka and ensures that they are operating efficiently and complying with educational standards.

Looking to the future

A key focus for Baraka going forward is to update the strategic plan and see how Baraka can better address the needs of the community they serve within the constraints of the funding available. As part of this, Baraka are looking at building on the collaboration with other organisations and exploring other opportunities to work together. To help with this, staff are attending workshops at Media Trust that explore how to bring many of the skills needed for this into Baraka.

Baraka firmly believes that JLC plays an ongoing role in helping to shape the organisation through policy-making, upskilling of youth opportunities and being a voice for charities.

Through funding they have been able to offer new opportunities for young people who may otherwise not have access to appropriate learning at home or school. Services have been provided that carefully work with young people to overcome barriers to learning – including young people in care: *‘Expanding our service to work beyond the edge of care with young people’*.

In response to these gaps, John Lyon’s Charity has supported new approaches such as:

- Funding supplementary schools across various boroughs.
- Setting up Young People’s Foundations to support multiple organisations. The Charity has initiated organisations coming together to champion their work in consortiums and to avoid duplication when resources are limited: *‘This scale could mean a better quality framework for the work we all wanted to do’*.

Grantees talked about having a platform through their work with John Lyon’s Charity to champion and talk about the most effective ways to engage reluctant learners: *‘JLC have given us the platform to talk to schools about creativity and influence practice within schools’*.

Other examples outline how John Lyon’s Charity has supported projects that has enabled **legacy building** within organisations. Grantees described the role of John Lyon’s Charity in helping to initiate connections and partnerships with other organisations and helping to leverage other sources of funding. Comments were made about John Lyon’s Charity instilling *‘confidence, curiosity and ownership’* and increasing the number of young people that are now able to access their projects. JLC’s commitment to core funding and funding staff salaries was highlighted again:

‘Funders often want to fund projects but not necessarily the staff. JLC looked at our staffing and realised that we weren’t able to run the programme, as we didn’t have enough staff, so they funded a Coordinator across all four schools and we’ve now tripled our offer in terms of activities and can source more organisations to send young people to.’

‘Three-year period of funding enables strong projects and pieces of work to be designed and delivered. This creates ongoing opportunities, sustainability and room to be confident, to evaluate and to change. Other funders have a much shorter time frame.’

What does this mean for John Lyon’s Charity?

Discussion with grantees during the review suggests three main ways that John Lyon’s Charity might support this Programme Area going forward:

1. **Champion a more coordinated approach to grant-making.** There was a call for John Lyon’s Charity to talk to other funders to agree where the most need is and for collective impact. Sharing their approach for *‘keeping good work going’* and participatory engagement and the value that it has brought could be beneficial for the sector more widely. Grantees would like the Charity to push other funders to consider the *‘funding ecology’* in local areas or on particular topics. Again, the Charity’s membership of London Funders was mentioned as an opportunity here.
2. **Support grantees with exit strategies.** There was a desire among grantees for John Lyon’s Charity to continue regular communication and face-to-face visits throughout the grant process. Grantees asked whether the Charity could offer consultations six months before the end of a grant to help ensure strategic options are planned in advance, as well as continuing this type of support between funding periods. For many, the relationship with the funder was as important as the money: *‘[We] receive moral support as well as financial’*. Grantees would like the Charity to broker introductions to other funders.

3. **Provide connections with others for practice development.** There were various suggestions for John Lyon’s Charity to act as a convenor and to engage with grantees that are hoping to influence policy and practice. The Charity could continue to connect with harder to reach audiences, and pinpoint specific schools, libraries or community groups that could benefit from other organisations supporting them. The Change of Perspectives conference was mentioned as an example of John Lyon’s Charity giving organisations the opportunity to create connections outside their borough and the chance to talk face-to-face about strategy and practice. Other suggestions included: a newsletter or a blog series showing the challenges and opportunities of different organisations’ work; offering training (e.g. Media Trust); developing a hub/shared space for charities to work alongside other charities supporting young people.

3

Key Messages

The role and contribution of John Lyon's Charity



This review set out to support John Lyon's Charity to understand the contribution it has made to charities and organisations supporting young people in nine London boroughs and explore its potential role as an influencer and thought leader.

Our findings show the significant value that the Charity has brought to children and young people living in the nine boroughs, across five themes:

- Children and Families
- Youth Clubs and Youth Activities
- Emotional Wellbeing
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
- Education and Learning

John Lyon's Charity is highly-regarded, valued and trusted by the organisations it funds. It is seen as a supportive, engaged funder with a solid understanding of the context and needs of the voluntary and community sector across the nine boroughs.

It occupies a distinctive position as a place-based funder – well networked within the local areas it operates, across the voluntary, public and independent funding sectors. Staff know the Beneficial Area well and use a relational approach to offer support and developmental advice to grantees. In this section, we look across the Programme Areas to draw out what the findings tell us about the role and contribution of the Charity, and outline how John Lyon's Charity might respond to this. Broadly, there are four distinct – but interrelated – messages:

1. **Articulate the John Lyon's Charity approach** to grant-making and the value that it brings through case study examples and showcasing, i.e. lead and be vocal about your approach: *'Show other funders their model and encourage others to follow it'; 'They are so established they can sway other funders to think differently'.*
2. **Core funding and long-term funding** enable a deep understanding of Programme Areas and trusting relationships with grantees, which can provide the bedrock for influencing work.
3. **Provide platforms for grantees** to have a voice on particular issues, i.e. stimulating, convening and equipping grantees.
4. **Champion the needs of small charities and protect their space.** The Charity is seen as well-placed to do this appropriately and effectively.

Hallmarks of the Charity's approach

We have found that the Charity's identity is rooted in three 'hallmarks', which have underpinned its contributions detailed throughout this report – it is relational; responsive; and responsible.

A relational funder

The Charity is seen as having a 'persistent' presence, *'walking alongside'* grantees and developing relationships of trust that allow organisations to adapt their practice and use their Grants Manager as a sounding board. Staff are present, well-networked locally and valued for developing relationships face-to-face through visits and attendance at local events. The useful and constructive nature of these relationships are partly due to the skill and experience of the staff team, who are seen as actively *'holding your hand through the process'* and *'using their experience – they listen to your need but encourage and push you to try things'.*

This relational approach was seen as helping to free up grantees to adapt and respond to the needs of their beneficiaries. Many grantees described the Charity's openness to discussing challenges they are currently facing. This approach has helped organisations to think strategically and flexibly about their possible direction and maintain their responsiveness to changes in local needs. Trust-based relationships also help to minimise some of the pressures grantees faced from other funders to work to targets or demonstrate impact. Grantees appreciated the proportionate, qualitative and non-prescriptive approach to reporting taken by the Charity:

'They do not ask for excessive reporting and are not rigid with the requirements. This means we have more freedom to adapt as we go along rather than just do things to fit funders' requirements, which can lead to doing things for the sake of it, rather than what is most needed for our users.'

Responsive

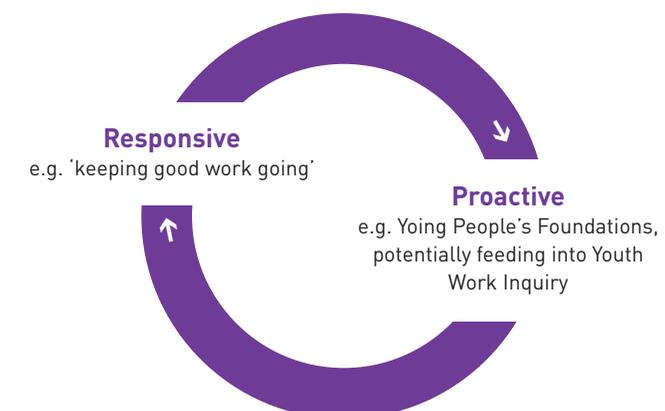
The Charity's responsiveness can be seen in two ways – at a strategic programme or geographic level, and in terms of enabling responsiveness in grantee organisations. The way the Charity funds – relational and often providing core funding – enables grantees to respond to the changing needs of children and young people in their communities. Within the current operating environment, this is valued by organisations that are trying to balance *'keeping good work going'* with responding to shifting challenges and pressures placed on young people, all while trying to survive in challenging financial times: *'They enabled us to grow, knowing we have a reliable partner over time. They've allowed us to think out loud'.*

We also see responsiveness in terms of the Charity's role and contribution to a specific issue, or in a given location. For example, grantees commented on the response to the Grenfell Tower fire: *'John Lyon's Charity showed imaginative leadership to get others working together in an emergency situation and to develop new practices'.* Continued support for youth work in the face of huge cuts, and an increasing focus on emotional wellbeing based on feedback from schools about young people's mental health, can both be understood as 'responsive' funding by a funder that actively seeks to understand – and act upon – the needs of children and young people.

Responsible

Support that is non-prescriptive has been appreciated by grantees and it was noted that John Lyon's Charity does not expect organisations to reinvent the wheel or *'fix something that isn't broken'* and instead supports organisations in an *'anchored'* way. Grantees mentioned that the Charity try to *'deal with the world as it is'*, and not where we want it to be'. The Charity has supported children and young people through both what it has funded, and how it funds. This includes offering core funding and long-term support to help give funded organisations financial stability and enable them to focus on responding to the needs of their communities.

Being a responsible funder is also about being proactive in challenging or championing changes to the structures and systems around the organisations it funds. For example, the work the Charity has done to develop Young People's Foundations; on the Cultural Inclusion Manifesto; and Schools Counselling Partnerships, has been developed in response to the changing operating environment for organisations supporting young people and aims to shift the needle on bigger, more systemic issues, that grantee organisations alone would not be able to tackle. As one organisation said: *'They are not just first aid'.*



The Charity was valued for appearing to actively balance both proactive and responsive approaches – supporting grassroots activity on the ground while responding to issues that affect operating environments when appropriate. See the diagram below for an initial attempt to visualise this idea.

Alongside these ‘hallmarks’ of the John Lyon’s Charity identity, it also champions three things:

1. **Prevention and early intervention work** The Charity promotes the value of early intervention work as an effective way of supporting young people before they reach crisis point. For example, funding early intervention work, promoting the value of youth work and activities that offer diverse and stimulating opportunities for young people.
2. **Genuine inclusion** John Lyon’s Charity encourages the movement away from ‘inclusive programmes’ towards ‘inclusive practice’. This was highlighted by grantees, particularly – but not exclusively – those working in the SEND sector. Examples are seen in the Charity’s involvement in the Cultural Inclusion Manifesto, bringing organisations together at the ‘Change of Perspectives’ conference, and trusting grantees to work in a way that best meet the needs of their communities.
3. **Developing practice** The Charity values continuous learning, building expertise, quality assurance and accreditation. Some of the ways that John Lyon’s Charity supports the development of practice is through convening organisations, encouraging purposeful partnerships, and a commitment to understanding the context in which it funds (both geographically and within Programme Areas).

Future role and contribution

What might the Charity do to build upon or capitalise on this identity for the benefit of the grantees and communities it serves? What does it mean to be a relational, responsive and responsible funder in 2019? What are the opportunities for thought leadership?

Throughout the report we have highlighted key messages for John Lyon’s Charity which were developed and sense-checked with grantees. Here, we draw this thinking together to look at how, where and what the Charity could champion, support and provide.

Championing ...

• **The value of particular approaches** to supporting children and young people – approaches that might otherwise be ‘at risk’ from lack of funding or interest/attention. For example:

- * **Youth work** promoting high standards with the possible idea of a quality or kite mark (co-produced with grantees).
- * **Inclusive practices** to support children and young people with SEND. Extending this to the Charity’s decision-making practices in terms of involving beneficiaries.
- * **Child or young person centred approaches to mental health**, which require both specialist and general approaches.

* Quality in supplementary education.

• Also champion the kind of **funding approaches** that can support organisations to work effectively to achieve benefits for children and young people. For example: core funding; long-term funding; relational approaches. This may also include articulating a willingness to champion where there are gaps in provision as part of a strategically proactive/responsive approach.

Supporting ...

- **The development of evidence** by using the Charity’s overview of specific issues to draw together partners and develop an evidence base for grantees to draw upon. This would also help grantees to feed their work into the Charity’s ‘championing’ activity. For example, to contribute to the youth work inquiry, or to champion quality assurance in supplementary schools.
- **Grantees to convene around key practice or policy issues**, underpinned by a relational approach that enables John Lyon’s Charity to constructively prompt and challenge. Work with organisations to develop approaches to quality and demonstrating effectiveness that are appropriate to small local organisations and to early intervention work. This needs to be purposeful in terms of focus and cohort. For example, Universal Credit or GDPR changes.
- **Meaningful partnerships** between organisations, lending support and convening power but not directing (Changing Perspectives was a good example of this). Taking a particular focus on supporting smaller charities to engage in partnership working, which might otherwise struggle to make time and space for this.

Providing ...

- **Core funding and long-term support** to keep ‘good work going’ and enable organisations to meet the needs of their communities.
- **A platform for grantees to showcase work**, as well as to share evidence across the portfolio of grants.
- **A quality mark** for other funders, or broker introductions as grantees come to the end of their funding term. The Charity is often the ‘first’ funder, so seen as well-placed for helping organisations to become ready for their next funding step.
- **Collaboration opportunities for smaller organisations**, particularly in the youth sector where there were some concerns about preserving space for small grassroots organisations which research shows are at risk of exclusion from local commissioning and other practices.⁶⁴
- **Capacity building support** on issues regarding the operation of charities (governance, regulation), as well as support for telling their stories (e.g. Media Trust training).

In conclusion

The findings indicate that John Lyon's Charity has made a significant contribution to the areas in which it works through operating a relational, responsible approach that effectively balances the need for both responsive and proactive work. Organisations funded by the Charity have described the value of a funder that 'walks alongside' them and has enabled them to shift and adapt to continue meeting the needs of children and young people in the face of significant upheaval in the world around them.

Looking ahead, this review raises four distinct – but related – areas for the Charity to consider:

1. **Articulate the John Lyon's Charity approach to grant-making** and the value that it brings through case study examples and showcasing, i.e. lead and be vocal about your approach: 'Show other funders their model and encourage others to follow it'; 'They are so established they can sway other funders to think differently'.
2. **Provide core funding and long-term funding.** The former enables organisational stability and allows organisations to drive in the direction required to meet beneficiary need. The latter recognises that in an environment with a high degree of uncertainty, long-term support is more fit for purpose than shorter term grants: 'With long-term funding comes sustainability. Can JLC think of five year grants?'
3. **Provide platforms for grantees to have a voice** on particular issues, i.e. stimulating, convening and equipping grantees. Doing this purposefully, intentionally and with careful consideration of the appropriate contribution and role of the Charity. Involve grantees in helping to find the right approach. Each issue or 'moment' for influence will require different things, e.g. a room; a convened meeting; a published report; gathering evidence; the CEO speaking to others with influence about a particular issue. These options are all part of the asset base the Charity can bring to supporting 'voice'. The exact response and contribution will need to be part of an ongoing conversation with the stakeholders involved.
4. **Champion the needs of small charities and protect their space.** The Charity is seen as a supporter and advocate for small grassroots charities. These kinds of organisations will require the Charity to take a proactive role on the above areas – to prompt, push and provide in ways that organisations are not able to do alone.

Footnotes

- ¹ Child Poverty Action Group (2019) 'Children still out in the cold'
- ² Department for Work and Pensions, (2019) 'Households Below Average Income: An analysis of the UK income distribution: 1994/95-2017/18'
- ³ Troubled Families runs from 2015-2020 to deliver targeted intervention for families with multiple problems. A recent interim evaluation of the programme found that it had reduced the number of children going into care.
- ⁴ Department for Communities and Local Government, (2016), *National Evaluation of the Troubled Families Programme: Final Synthesis Report*
- ⁵ Local Government Association, (2019) *Briefing General Debate on Children's Social Care in England*
- ⁶ National Audit Office (2018) *Financial sustainability of local authorities 2018*
- ⁷ Action for Children (2019) *Children's funding slashed by a third per child, leaving thousands at risk of falling into crisis*
- ⁸ Centre for London (2019), *The London Intelligence, Issue 8*
- ⁹ <http://www.endchildpoverty.org.uk/poverty-in-your-area-2019/>
- ¹⁰ Since 2014, there has been a 26% rise in the number of children on child protection plans; a 17% rise in the number of children in care; and a 7% increase in referrals to children's social care services (*Action for Children, 2019*)
- ¹¹ i.e. *the National Youth Social Action Fund* and subsequent *#iwill Fund*, as well as *National Citizen Service*
- ¹² *Greater London Authority (2017) The London Knife Crime Strategy*
- ¹³ The Guardian (2019), 'Number of London youth clubs nearly halved since 2011 riots'.
- ¹⁴ S, Berry. Green Party member of the London Assembly (2019), *London's Lost Youth Services 2019*
- ¹⁵ Reported jointly until 2015-16 for Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and Hammersmith and Fulham. Overall cut to 2018-19 combines the changes to both these budgets.
- ¹⁶ Although the Harrow figures show an increase, there was no increase in the revenue budget. A short-term Public Health grant was partially allocated to youth services to support its preventative interventions.
- ¹⁷ The Guardian (2019), 'Number of London youth clubs nearly halved since 2011 riots'.
- ¹⁸ As above
- ¹⁹ The Young People's Foundation (YPF) model is the response of John Lyon's Charity to the ongoing pressures on the Children and Young People's sector and specifically the issues faced by the voluntary sector in our Beneficial Area.
- ²⁰ <https://www.ukyouth.org/what-we-do/#our-member>
- ²¹ APG (2019), *Inquiry into Youth Work: Final Report*
- ²² All-Party Parliamentary Group on Youth Affairs (2019), *Youth Work Inquiry: Final Report*
- ²³ <https://londonfunders.org.uk/>
- ²⁴ International Journal of Children's Spirituality, Volume 14, Issue 3: Spirituality and Well-being (2009), 'Happiness, emotional well-being and mental health – what has children's spirituality to offer?'
- ²⁵ Nuffield Trust (2018), *Striking increase in mental health conditions in children and young people*
- ²⁶ NHS research classified mental disorders into four main categories: emotional, behavioural, hyperactivity and other less common disorders. *NHS Digital (2017), Mental Health of Children and Young People in England.*
- ²⁷ House of Commons Library, (2018) *Mental health policy in England*
- ²⁸ NHS (2019) *The NHS Long Term Plan – a summary*
- ²⁹ The Guardian (2019) *Children who need help with mental health face postcode lottery.*

- ³⁶ Ofsted (2018), *The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2017/18*
- ³⁷ The London Assembly (2018) *Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) provision in London*
- ³⁸ House of Commons Education Committee (2018) *'Forgotten children: alternative provision and the scandal of ever increasing exclusions'*
- ³⁹ Local Government Association (2019), *Bright Futures: SEND funding*
- ⁴⁰ Ofsted (2018) *The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2017/18*
- ⁴¹ Local Government Association (2019), *Bright Futures: SEND funding*
- ⁴² As per reference 38
- ⁴³ As per reference 38
- ⁴⁴ Policy Research Forum (2018) *Policy for SEND and Inclusion: examining UK national and some European differences*
- ⁴⁵ As per reference 38
- ⁴⁶ Ofsted (2018) *The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2017/18*
- ⁴⁷ Local Government Association (2019) *Have we reached a 'tipping point'? Trends in spending for children and young people with SEND in England*
- ⁴⁸ Ofsted (2018) *The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2017/18*
- ⁴⁹ Sport England (2018), *Active Lives Survey*
- ⁵⁰ The London Assembly (2018) *Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) provision in London*
- ⁵¹ London Assembly (2018) *Together: Transforming the lives of children and young people with special education needs and disabilities in London*
- ⁵² <https://culturalinclusion.uk/>
- ⁵³ John Lyon's Charity (2019), *'Change of Perspectives: Art Partnerships for young people with SEND'*
- ⁵⁴ The Joseph Rowntree Foundation: *Education in England*
- ⁵⁵ The Joseph Rowntree Foundation, (2007) *A review of research on the links between education and poverty*
- ⁵⁶ As per reference 49
- ⁵⁷ The Paul Hamlyn Foundation (2015) *Supplementary Schools: Descriptive analysis of supplementary school pupils' characteristics and attainment in seven local authorities in England, 2007/08— 2011/12*
- ⁵⁸ 'Academisation' was used in reference to a move towards local authority maintained schools becoming academies
- ⁵⁹ Department for Education, and Education and Skills Funding Agency (2014) *Funding Agency Pupil premium: funding and accountability for schools*
- ⁶⁰ Education Policy Institute (2018) *School funding pressures in England*
- ⁶¹ The Guardian (2019) *'More than 1,000 English schools turn to online donations to raise funds'*
- ⁶² Schools Week (2018) *'DfE sets out 'red flags' for parents who use out-of-school settings'*
- ⁶³ Mortimer, C (2017), The Independent, *'Private faith schools are 'spreading beliefs that clash with British values and equalities law' Ofsted warns.'*
- ⁶⁴ IVAR (2018) Value of Small

APPENDIX ONE

Participating organisations

A.P.P.L.E.
 Action on Disability
 Art Against Knives
 The Avenues Youth Project
 Baraka Community Association
 Barnet Mencap
 The Brandon Centre
 Brent Centre for Young People
 British Library
 BritSom
 Brunswick Club
 Catholic Children Society
 Contact
 Everyday Magic
 Family Friends
 Grasvenor Project
 Hammersmith and Fulham Arts Festival
 Harrow Virtual School
 Helena Kennedy Foundation
 Home-Start Barnet
 Institute of Imagination
 King's Cross Brunswick Neighbourhood Association
 New Horizon Youth Centre
 P.E.S.T.S
 Place2Be
 Postal Museum
 Primary Shakespeare Company
 Queens Park Community School
 Real Action
 Salisbury World
 The School and Family Works
 Schools Counselling Partnership
 Shepherds Bush Families Project & Children's Centre
 Sulgrave Club
 Victoria and Albert Museum
 The Village School
 Watford FC Community Trust (Cedars)
 West London Zone
 Westbourne Park Family Centre
 Westminster Befriend a Family
 Winchester Project
 Woodland Adventure Forest School Harrow
 Wormwood Scrubs Pony Centre
 Young Barnet Foundation
 Young Harrow Foundation

Summary questions from grantee focus groups and survey

1. Organisational purpose

- As an organisation, what is the most important change you are trying to bring about? What contribution do you want to make?

2. Key milestones within each Programme Area

- How would you describe your organisation's journey?
- How would you describe the current operating environment, both for your organisation and the beneficiaries that you serve?

3. What contribution has JLC made to your work and the field?

- What words/phrases would you use to describe JLC?
- What has JLC support and funding enabled you to do? (specific examples)
- How would you describe JLC's contribution overall to the field of [PROGRAMME AREA]?
- What have you liked about JLC's support and what would you change?

4. JLC in the future

- How could JLC support you more going forwards?
- In which areas could JLC develop their role as a thought-leader and help to increase your voice?



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