



# Annual Impact Report

September 2024 – September 2025  
Harmony House Dagenham CIO

# A welcome from our



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## CEO

What a year for Harmony House! In May, I celebrated my first full year as part of the team, and I'm beaming with pride when I look at how far we've come together.

This year, we've seen our nurseries begin to flourish again, thanks to the tireless efforts of our staff and a renewed focus. We've also opened our new community library, creating a calm and welcoming space for people of all ages to enjoy. We've begun hosting more than a dozen new weekly groups, including a women's group for survivors of domestic abuse and trafficking, elders' bowls, baby groups, and accessible movement classes. We are absolutely loving having a building full of noise and life again!

We've also laid the groundwork for some exciting new projects. In September, we'll launch an intergenerational dance class in partnership with BabyZone, bringing young children and older adults together for a boogie and a laugh.

Our Luncheon Project is launching to provide nutritious, home-cooked meals in a warm group setting for 60 older residents once a week and the Connect project has been extended, continuing our work helping people rebuild confidence and social ties during times of isolation.

Alongside this practical and creative work, we've strengthened the foundations of our organisation. This year saw the embedding of a new Board of Trustees with deep and varied experience – from safeguarding and ageing well to marketing, legal and healthcare leadership. Their insight is shaping our direction and helping us build a more resilient and impactful charity.

Harmony House continues to be a place where people come not just to receive support, but to find friendship and rediscover purpose. I'm so grateful to our staff, trustees, partners, funders and community members for everything you've contributed this year and I can't wait to see what the next year brings!

Warm regards,

*Bee Whitaker, CEO*

## Summer Highlight

We hosted our first Summer Fete event in over 10 years and welcomed over 250 people into Harmony House for performances, food, bouncy castles, locally run stalls and games. It was a joy to see so many members of the community all together!

## Winter Highlight

Our Christmas Elders Event saw 70 elders joining us for lunch, dancing and raffles and we were even joined by our amazing nursery children for a beautiful singing performance followed by even more dancing!

## Autumn Highlight

We launched our brand new website (go and have a look!) with the incredible pro-bono support from Demi Aboderin at TechVA. This finally allows us to show the work we're doing for the community in its best light. Thank you Demi!

## Spring Highlight

The whole community came together to help us to build our community library! Many people donated books, some people did our "sponsor a bookcase" campaign and local children created artwork for the walls.



# Supporting Barking and Dagenham since 1993

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This year has seen our nursery occupancy increase by over 30%, allowing dozens more children to experience companionship, stimulation and challenges while their parents have the reassurance that their little ones are safe, supported and truly cared for.

*"Harmony House Nursery has been fantastic for my son. The caring and professional staff create a warm and nurturing environment. The facilities are excellent, offering a safe and stimulating space. My son thrived both socially and academically. Well done and thank you!"*  
– Nursery Parent



"The lunches give me a chance to see my friends, eat great food and dance the day away!"

Dot\*, SilverNet Groups Attendee

This year we have saved the local authority approximately £502,300 in services alone. We estimate that we save another £1,000,000 per annum in terms of prevention. This could include reducing hospital readmissions through Connect, preventing injury through the Handyman project or reducing cognitive-deterioration through Companionship.

2,359

Members of the community that have been directly supported by us this year (not including nurseries)

240

Average number of children enrolled in our nurseries

3564

Number of hours of direct support we have given to the community this year (not including the nurseries)

## Spotlight on: Connect Project

Connect is a unique project designed to support people who are leaving hospital and returning home without strong social networks around them. We're working alongside eight other VCFSE groups in partnership to deliver some truly powerful, deeply human work.

Instead of offering a fixed set of services, Connect begins with a conversation. What matters to you? What makes you feel safe? What would make life feel a little easier right now? From there, local organisations work side by side with residents to help them rebuild confidence, form new connections and find joy in everyday community life.

What makes Connect so powerful is its belief in people. Rather than focusing on what someone lacks, it starts with what they enjoy, what they already know, and who they might want to meet. That might mean joining a bowls group, getting help with housing, or just having someone to check in. It is gentle, flexible and deeply human. At Harmony House, we are proud to be part of this compassionate approach that is not only easing the transition from hospital to home, but helping to build a stronger, more connected borough for everyone. We are delighted to continue our work on Connect this year!



# Case Study – SilverNet Groups

Eddie\* is 81 years old. A widower living alone, he was referred to us by the hospital discharge team after a fall at home. Eddie lives with dyslexia, significant hearing loss, and a range of health and mobility issues that had made daily life increasingly difficult.

On our first visit, it became clear that he was struggling to manage. His home was cluttered, he wasn't taking his medication properly, and due to limited mobility, he hadn't been able to use his shower in some time.

We stepped in to coordinate support and bring stability back to Eddie's life. A care agency now visits him three times a week, and a dosette box has helped him manage his medication safely. We arranged a cleaner to help declutter the house, and when we discovered his heating wasn't working, we brought in a boiler engineer to repair it. Gradually, with the right support in place, Eddie's confidence began to return. We started attending medical appointments together and set up a diary to help him stay on top of things.

One of the biggest changes came when Eddie joined our Silvernet Get Together group at Harmony House. At first, he was hesitant, but now he attends two different groups each week, including a local history group that he loves. He's even got a mobility scooter, which means he can get out and about on his own terms. Eddie is reconnecting with his community, making new friends, and most importantly, regaining a sense of independence and joy.

*\*Names changed to protect the identity of our service users and staff*



# Case Study – Nursery

When Amina arrived in Barking and Dagenham with her two-year-old daughter, Layla, she faced challenges that many migrant families know all too well. Amina spoke limited English, didn't understand the UK childcare system, and couldn't afford nursery fees. With no support network around her, she was trying to take Layla with her to work, a situation that was stressful for both of them and unsustainable in the long term.

A local GP who knew the family well reached out to Harmony House to see if we could help. We arranged a meeting with Sue, our nursery finance specialist, and brought in a translator to ensure Amina could fully understand the government-funded childcare options available to her. With translated explanation and the right support, we were able to help Amina access her full entitlement and enrol Layla into one of our nurseries completely free of charge.

Since starting nursery, Layla has blossomed. She is building friendships, gaining confidence, and thriving in a safe and stimulating environment. Meanwhile, Amina has been linked with free English language classes and is already beginning to feel more confident navigating life in the UK.

*\*Names changed to protect the identity of our service users and staff.*



# Case Study – Connect Project

## Pauline's Story:

"I'm 85 and have lived in this house for over forty years. I worked for the council for 44 years looking after babies before they were adopted – I stopped counting when I reached a hundred!

Last year was very hard. My husband died and two weeks later I had a stroke. I lost eight friends in a year. At first, I could only move my eyes. I've come a long way since then, but I still struggle with balance and confidence. My daughters are wonderful, but they live far away, and I was spending most of my time on my own.

Before meeting Abby\* from Connect, I was housebound. I've always been independent – I'd go to Romford or bingo on my own – but suddenly I couldn't get out. With Abby's help, I've been on the bus again for the first time in years. We went shopping together and found the right walker for me. Having someone to go out with has given me a new life – before, I couldn't get out at all.

I used to have a night carer because I was so nervous being alone, but with Abby's support I feel safer now. She even helped me fit a new lock, which means I can sleep better at night. I feel more confident, less isolated, and able to enjoy life again."

*\*Names changed to protect the identity of our service users and staff.*



# We'd like to thank all our donors for their generous support



## Acknowledgements

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our funders over the past 12 months. Your generous contributions have empowered us to continue making a meaningful impact in the lives of vulnerable individuals and families in our community. Thank you for standing with us and fueling our mission. Special thanks to:

- London Borough of Barking and Dagenham
- London Borough of Redbridge
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