



# London Borough of Hackney Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission

15 July 2020

Guinness' community investment, approaches to supporting our residents, and partnerships with the Hackney Council to improve social and economic wellbeing in the area

**great service, great homes  
a great place to work and a great business**

## Guinness - written evidence

Our written evidence is in response to the request from the panel to explore the following aspects of our role in the community:

- How we are working in partnership with the council and others to promote social, environmental and economic wellbeing in the borough - looking at one live issue (recycling);
- Our approaches to wider community investment; and
- How we are supporting residents to fulfil their potential and to benefit from opportunity and growth.

## How we are working in partnership with the council to enable higher levels of recycling on our estates

- Mixed recycling food and waste bins positioned at key points across Guinness estates.
- Cross contamination by residents and then non collection is a major issue.
- Potential for additional investment at Southwold identified to help address issues.
- Fly Tipping problems exist across all our estates. Significant time spent trying to identify perpetrators and to remove waste.
- Widespread use of posters and notices across our estates. Stamford Hill in particular.
- Problems of non residents using recycling bins.
- All main contractors recycle in line with contract terms.

## Employment & Training – national opportunities

### Tutors United online teaching

- Support for years 4, 5 and 6 students on core subjects in 2020/21.
- Includes a range of targeted support depending on the level of support required. Such as, live and recorded webinar tutorials, resources and homework.

### Apprenticeships

- We placed 152 apprentices into roles across a range of business areas including customer services, garden services and trades between 2017 and 2020.
- We hired 70% of our apprentices into full-time employment at Guinness in 2018/19, and others moved into full-time work with our partner organisations.

### Online Pop Up Business School

- In partnership with Places for People housing association we are supporting Pop Up Business School to run an online school in 2020/21 for about 180 people who are interested in starting and operating a SME, and learning new skills.

### Aspire Awards

- Award residents funding for training that supports their entry or return to the workplace, further develops an existing career, starts or grows a small business, or even further develops sporting or creative talents.
- Since 2009 our Aspire Awards have helped over 340 residents with more than £400,000 of training, equipment, travel costs and community projects.

## Activities in Hackney

Guinness operates community centres at Stamford Hill, High Hills, Southwold and Northwold, which are used for a variety of Hackney community activities. Most recently this has included:

- **providing substantial funding to support community activities at the Northwold Centre**, including 5-day youth and holiday programme, computer suite, social events, bingo, martial arts and other fitness activities;
- **supporting the “Mole on the hill Stamford Hill” play scheme**, in partnership with Southern Housing - provided funding in 2018/19 and 2019/20 to provide childcare for local families during the holidays;
- **Supporting “Tutors United” at the Stamford Hill centre**, in partnership with Southern Housing, to provide an educational attainment project for primary school children living in poverty;
- **Hackney Youth hosted at the Stamford Hill Centre** by Hackney Council twice a week;
- **support local activities**, including weekly coffee mornings sessions for local residents to get together in Stamford Hill.

## COVID-19 support in Hackney

The safety of our customers and our colleagues is, and will always be, our top priority. We have continued to support our customers during this period, including:

- **calling all vulnerable customers** to ensure that they were ok and signposted them to the local support available. Where we struggled to make contact, we contacted social services, hospitals and even the police to check-in;
- **making referrals to our own our customer support team** to provide urgent support to those struggling to pay their rent due to job loss and help them to claim for universal credit. *[see slide 7 for more information];*
- Customer Liaison Officers continuing to **carry out Fire Safety Inspections and urgent customer visits**, to keep our homes and customers safe;
- **continuing to carry out essential services**, including essential repairs, gas servicing, health and safety checks, and enhanced cleaning. Our regular repairs service has recently restarted in line with government advice and guidance;
- **continuing to supporting our older and more vulnerable customers** by conducting regular welfare calls to our older customers to check in and see if they needed any additional support, and (nationally) continued care services to all care customers.
- **partnering with Talk, Listen, Change**, to support customers to work through their emotions and develop an understanding of how to manage them during the pandemic.

# Customer Support Case Summary - Hackney

## Last 12 months

| Case Volume | Support Provided*        |
|-------------|--------------------------|
| 43          | Universal Credit**       |
| 19          | DHP                      |
| 32          | Housing Benefit          |
| 15          | Foodbank                 |
| 42          | Benefit Check            |
| 10          | Disability Benefit       |
| 10          | Tenancy Support Referral |
| <b>171</b>  | <b>Total cases</b>       |

## Financial Outcomes

| Amount          | Financial Support                             |
|-----------------|---|
| £79,847         | Customers income and grants                   |
| £186,309        | Income and grants to sustain their tenancy*** |
| <b>£266,157</b> | <b>Total support</b>                          |

\* The core support is always financial and to enable tenancy sustainment but this also leads to support in accessing external agencies for wrap around support  
 \*\* This includes claim, appeal and backdate request submissions, applications for direct and/or alternative payments, budgeting and financial support  
 \*\*\* These specifically relate to housing costs e.g. housing benefits, discretionary housing payments and Universal Credit housing cost elements

## Coronavirus Impact

Since 16<sup>th</sup> March we have had 78 requests for advice and assistance in Hackney. Our Hardship Fund has helped customers with emergency food and energy top-ups.

a great service, great homes  
 a great place to work and a great business

# Tenancy Enforcement Case Summary

## Year to Date

| Case volume | Behaviour type        |
|-------------|-----------------------|
| 8           | Threatening behaviour |
| 2           | Drug misuse           |
| 4           | Safeguarding          |
| 3           | Noise disturbance     |
| 1           | Domestic abuse        |
| <b>18</b>   | <b>Total cases</b>    |

## Live

| Case volume | Behaviour type        |
|-------------|-----------------------|
| 8           | Threatening behaviour |
| 2           | Drug misuse           |
| 1           | Noise disturbance     |
| 4           | Safeguarding          |
| <b>15</b>   | <b>Total cases</b>    |

Of these, there are 4 live legal cases



# Tackling domestic abuse

- Across all Guinness properties, domestic abuse reports have more than doubled between 16<sup>th</sup> March and the end of May 2020, when some social restrictions were introduced.
- This is now reducing and we continue to work with teams across the business and external agencies to support survivors. This has included getting criminal orders, putting protection in place, making customers and their homes safe.
- Guinness is currently working towards receiving accreditation from the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance's (DAHA), which has been delayed due to COVID-19. We have passed 6/8 of the standards so far, and expect DAHA to finalise the accreditation process in August/September.

Guinness domestic abuse cases nationally between 16 March – 26 May

