

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion



Report
2020–2021



Chief executive's introduction



The financial year of 2020/21 was like no other, with global attention on the urgency of addressing inequality as never before. The Black Lives Matter movement has given everyone cause to reflect. For organisations to meet the challenge of

dismantling structural racism and other forms of inequality, their part in perpetuating those inequalities must be part of that reflection. There must be honest and open discussion that breaks down the silence surrounding the sensitive topics of race, privilege, discrimination and marginalisation.

Here at Notting Hill Genesis, we believe in housing that works for everyone. We are committed to being a resident-centric organisation at every level and to celebrating the diversity of both our resident and employee communities. If we are to authentically reflect those communities, we need to change the balance of power in our organisation.

We are making progress. In 2020/21 we welcomed 12 new board and committee members, increasing the diversity of our governance community, but equality for all cannot be achieved overnight. Instead, we must commit to pressing for change over the long term, in order to dismantle systems of structural

privilege and disadvantage with deep historical roots. This is a journey, not a quick fix, and we have more to do. But we are moving in the right direction.

Our equality, diversity and inclusion (ED&I) action plan for 2021/22 sets out how we will continue to live our corporate value of inclusion, and make further progress towards our goal of making our organisation a more equal and inclusive place to work – a place where people from all backgrounds and walks of life are supported to achieve their full potential, and are celebrated as they do so. This annual ED&I report looks back over 2020/21, reflecting on our achievements and sharing key data that shows both progress and areas of concern. On the staff side, it covers our ambitious Race at Work action plan, our talent and learning programmes, and the work of our five staff networks: Beehive (women), PROUD@NHG (LGBTQ+), Cultural Energie (Black, Asian and minority ethnic), Carers, and Parallel (health and disability). Equality, diversity and inclusion are also central themes of our work with residents, and this report shares highlights of the range of activities we delivered to promote inclusion and support our diverse communities.

I am grateful to each of our staff networks and to every colleague who has played their part in contributing to the progress we've made, and who I know will continue to drive us forward in the future.

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Mental health

The pandemic increased instances and severity of mental health conditions, but it also boosted awareness and brought discussions of stigmatising topics such as loneliness, bereavement and poor mental health into mainstream conversation. Our wellbeing programme responded to the ever-changing context of the pandemic by providing resources, information, and safe spaces for sharing and discussion.

Our programme of free exercise classes and other wellbeing activities including guided meditation, move and stretch classes, and our staff choir, allow colleagues to enhance their wellbeing and connect with one another. Our couch to 5k challenge launched at the end of March 2021, supported staff to safely reach an achievable running goal with peer support providing additional motivation.

Our popular January wellbeing campaign encouraged colleagues to take small, manageable steps towards improved wellbeing. Our monthly wellbeing newsletter launched in autumn 2020 and draws attention to a different element of wellbeing each month, setting out practical actions and signposting to sources of support and further information, including the wealth of resources available on Milo – our intranet – which we continue to expand.

Although the expansion of our mental health first aider (MHFA) programme was delayed due to the pandemic, we closed 2020/21 having launched

remote training with a new cohort of trainees, bringing us closer to our target of one in 10 staff being trained as MHFAs. Following the success of a week of events around Time to Talk Day, our MHFAs continued to host weekly Time to Talk

about Mental Health sessions that give staff the opportunity to connect with colleagues over discussion of mental health in a confidential safe space and be signposted to further support as needed.

Staff network focus

During a year in which health and wellbeing have been central themes, **Parallel – our health and disability staff network** – have raised the profile of and demystified physical and mental health conditions, contributing to eradicating stigma and fostering a culture of openness around these sensitive issues.

At Parallel’s Human Library event, colleagues were invited to ask questions of network member ‘books’, who spoke openly about their health condition or disability, including their journeys and day-to-day experiences. On International Day of People with Disabilities the network raised awareness of a range of invisible conditions in line with the day’s theme for 2020. On Time to Talk Day, network members hosted a confidential discussion on mental health, creating a safe space for staff to share their experiences, connect with others, and learn about available support.

Parallel have taken an intersectional approach, discussing the importance of accessibility for disabled people from different backgrounds and walks of life, and the need to make spaces for people with disabilities safe for, and inclusive of, individuals who are marginalised in other ways.

In line with our organisational goal of equipping all staff to take responsibility for ED&I, articles from Parallel members on disabilities and health conditions supported colleagues to enhance their learning, gain a deeper understanding of the experiences of others, and break down the silence that often surrounds disability and physical and mental health conditions.

Over the course of the year, Parallel’s programme of events and other awareness raising activities contributed to an increase in membership by more than one third, with some staff openly disclosing their disability or health condition in the workplace for the first time.



Race at Work action plan

From May 2020, the momentum of the international Black Lives Matter movement helped to amplify the voices of staff who had raised concerns around equality and a lack of inclusivity at Notting Hill Genesis. Motivated by colleagues' courage to speak out, and their stories of personal experiences, we reassessed how we make staff feel valued, and the ways in which we had at times failed to do so. This prompted the decision to make changes.

Recognising the need for senior sponsorship of a more ambitious approach to advancing equality and eliminating discrimination, we appointed a director lead for diversity. Under their guidance, our newly appointed diversity transitional project manager led a programme of initiatives to launch and embed our new approach. This work was supported by our five staff networks, colleagues in key roles across the organisation, and a committed panel of black staff who provided guidance, input, and held us to account where needed.

In summer 2020, our Big Conversation gave staff the opportunity to share their experiences and respond to key questions, including what ethnic equality should look and feel like at work, and what the organisation should be doing to tackle the issue of racism at work. These conversations helped to shape Stop the Clock, a conference dedicated to addressing the issue of ethnic

Staff network focus

Our newest staff network launched with five members one month before the first UK lockdown. Despite the challenges that remote working presents to communication and engagement, **our carers network** has increased its membership more than five times, to a total of 29 colleagues. That membership has increased so significantly during a time when carers, perhaps more than any other group, have faced increased demands on their time, is a testament to the value that this network adds to its members.



Weekly carers catch-ups provide a confidential safe space for network members to meet other colleagues with care responsibilities to share stories and experiences, and receive mutual support from those in similar circumstances.

The network published three staff experience stories on Milo, showcasing the diversity of carers' backgrounds and experiences, normalising discussions about care in the workplace and introducing to the organisation visible role models and champions who others can reach out to.

Our network chair raised awareness of the experiences of staff carers internally by presenting to the executive board, our directors and the human resources team, and by discussing care responsibilities, mental health and accessing support, in an article in our resident magazine.

The Am I a Carer presentation at our Stop the Clock conference demystified the role that carers play in families and communities and resulted in four staff members identifying themselves as carers.

The network's finale for 2020/21 was to secure executive board approval for Notting Hill Genesis to sign up to Harry's Pledge. The four elements of the pledge set out commitments to improving our employment practices for staff with unpaid care responsibilities; making our offices and community spaces as accessible as possible; building more fully accessible homes; and working to further professionalise paid care work.

inequality, with Black Lives Matter as its central theme.

External speakers included Arike Oke, managing director of the Black Cultural Archives; Olu Olanrewaju, associate director of Altair International; Cherron Inko-Tariah, author of *The Power of Staff Networks*, and Kul Verma, a leading authority on organisational development. More than 1,200 staff heard these and other high profile external speakers share their experiences and expertise, attended breakout sessions delivered by colleagues covering allyship, resident diversity, tackling racial abuse and celebrating diversity through music, and discussed the issues raised in informal networking sessions throughout the day.

The outputs of the Big Conversation, Stop the Clock and discussions with our Black Lives Matter panel and staff networks all helped to inform our Race at Work action plan. A truly collaborative approach saw representatives from our policy, human resources, communications and frontline teams along with our Cultural Energie chairs, and other staff with lived experience, join together to form project groups to deliver the six strands of the action plan, each under the sponsorship of a member of the executive board.

Each project group delivered quick wins along with a roadmap for future phases, including plans for embedding new approaches into business as usual. Our deputy group director of central services will provide executive level leadership as we move forward, ensuring that our commitments around ethnic equality and equality, diversity and inclusion more broadly, are central aspects of our organisational culture.



The staff who first drew attention to the ways in which we were falling short as an organisation in our approach to ethnic equality have raised our aspirations and enhanced our commitment to delivering long overdue change. We still have a significant amount of work to deliver, and it will take time to reap the benefits of some of our initiatives, but the progress we have made over the past year has been dramatic and unparalleled in scale.

We continue to deliver on the commitments in the G15 chief executive pledge on BAME diversity and are sharing best practice with our peer organisations in order to pass on our lessons learned and to enhance our own approach.

New and returning parents catch-ups

Recognising the challenges involved in adapting to parenthood, and to working parenthood, in autumn 2020 we introduced new and returning parents catch-up sessions. These monthly meetings provide a confidential safe space for staff of any gender who are currently on, soon to go on, or recently returned from, maternity, paternity, shared parental or adoption leave. The opportunity to meet one another helps new parents to feel connected to the organisation while on family leave and to ask questions about the return to work of those who have recently made the transition themselves.

The majority of the UK workforce had the opportunity to lean on and learn from each other as we adjusted to working from home at the start of the first lockdown. Those returning from family leave were faced with the additional challenge of adjusting from home as the site of full-time parenthood to home as office, often long after others had settled into a new normal. Our sessions have provided a cohort of peers who have supported each other through this unique transition.

Key data

We use a range of data to better understand issues within our organisation and to inform interventions to address them, including analysing by diversity strand the staff who go through our disciplinary procedure and those who raise a grievance.

There is some over-representation of Black/ Black British (African) staff among those who go through our disciplinary process. This is linked to the over-representation of this group in our care and support service, where the nature of the work means disciplinarys are more common.

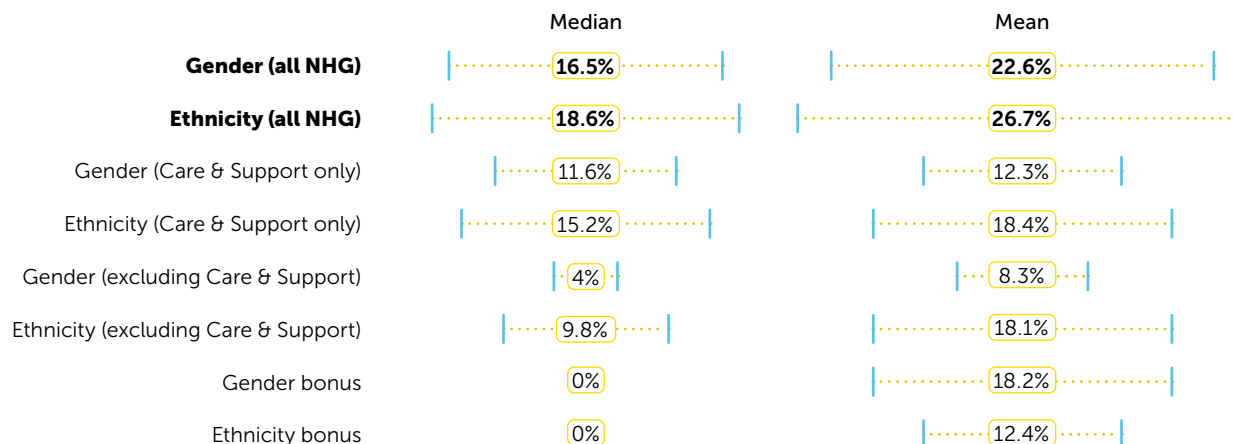
Our male staff are more likely than our female staff to raise a grievance, as are staff who declare a disability, compared to those who don't. Although case numbers are relatively small, these apparent trends will be investigated further to address any underlying drivers.

We went beyond the government-mandated approach to calculating our gender pay gap, with in-depth analysis of both our gender and ethnicity pay gaps, allowing us to identify the glass ceilings for different groups. This quantitative data supports the qualitative insight gained through our Big Conversation and other channels, and has provided both clarity about how much work must be done to achieve equality, and helped to identify the steps we can take to do so.

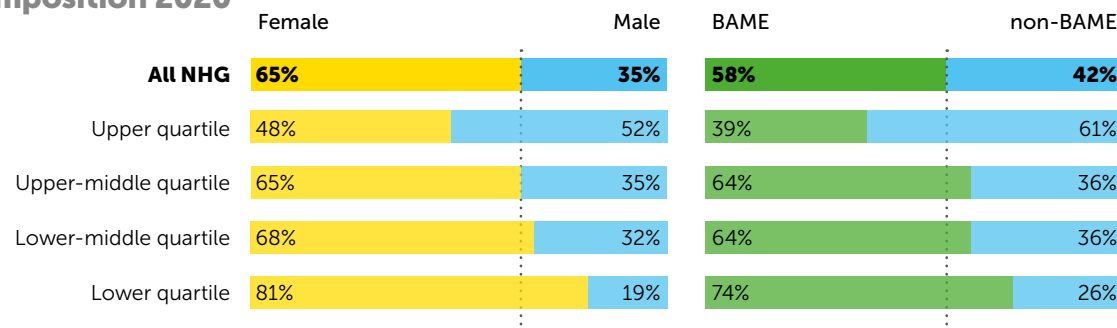
In addition to calculating the pay gap between "White" and "BAME" staff, we also looked at the distribution of staff from several different ethnic groups, across the hierarchy of our

organisation. This allowed us to understand how the experiences of, and the barriers faced by, different groups falling under the very broad term BAME, vary.

Gender and ethnicity pay gaps 2020



Staff composition 2020



Talent and learning

Our approach to talent and learning is key to removing barriers to progression and empowering staff to achieve their full potential, making Notting Hill Genesis a more equal and inclusive place to work.

Analysis of access to our competitive development programmes is approximately proportionate for staff of different genders and ethnic backgrounds, with male staff and white staff being slightly over-represented, and female and black staff being slightly under-represented. The numbers involved are very low, meaning that other diversity strands can't be analysed in a meaningful way, and the slight disparity in access by gender and ethnicity is not statistically significant. That said, we will continue to analyse access to these programmes over time, allowing us to identify any trends which may emerge when larger data sets are reviewed.

In the autumn, one colleague took up her place on the prestigious Future of London Leaders Plus programme, three colleagues began development journeys on the G15 Accelerate programme, and our 14 emerging leaders begin our flagship internal development programme.

Future of London Leaders Plus equips those already in leadership roles to navigate increasing risk and responsibility, and to develop greater resilience. We ringfenced this opportunity

Staff network focus

As key drivers of our work on ethnic equality, the co-chairs and other members of **our Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) staff network** were instrumental in shaping

cultural energie

the notting hill genesis bame group

and delivering our Big Conversation, Stop the Clock conference and our Race at Work action plan. The network chairs delivered a powerful message to attendees in a video that lasted eight minutes and 46 seconds – the amount of time it took for George Floyd to be killed. They invited viewers to walk in the shoes of their colleagues to gain an understanding of the physical, mental and emotional impact of systemic and day-to-day racial discrimination, and emphasised that it's everyone's duty to speak out against injustice.

Cultural Energie were instrumental in this corporate work and increased their membership by an incredible 130%, to 246, or more than 12% of all staff, and delivering a more ambitious programme of activities, events and awareness raising than ever before.

The network also grew their steering group to 14, with leads focusing on the priority areas of career, culture, networking, and mentoring, as part of their successful pillar approach. The network has increased engagement not only with their own members but with the wider staff group, amplifying the voices of staff from diverse backgrounds by empowering and supporting them to share their perspectives and experiences. Staff blogs explored Modern India, Bollywood and food, celebrating Notting Hill carnival, the link between Irish civil rights and the Black Lives Matter movement and commemorated the Lekki Tollgate massacre.

Other awareness raising and cultural recognition articles have included Indian Independence Day, Pakistan Independence Day, the International Day for the Abolition of Modern Slavery, Islamophobia Awareness Month, Hanukkah, Holocaust Memorial Day, Lunar New Year, Martin Luther King Day and Ghanaian Independence Day, with regular newsletters recognising national independence days, religious holidays and other dates of cultural significance.

Black History Month 2020 included celebrations of Black excellence focusing on public figures, a history and culture education campaign, a discussion of the documentary film 13th, and a series of career development sessions led by senior staff and high profile external speakers.

to staff from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds to help address under-representation of staff at the level the programme targets.

G15 Accelerate is a 15-18 month Chartered Management Institute leadership development programme for BAME managers who want to speed up their career trajectory. Masterclasses from leaders across the G15, modules on personal development and advanced leadership training and exclusive access to thought leaders, executive sponsors and bespoke events will equip them to take the next steps in their careers.

Our competitive emerging leaders programme involves eight months of bespoke training sessions, action learning sets, and project work that will be recognised by a level 5 award from the Institute of Leadership and Management. The participants represent the diversity of departments and personal backgrounds at Notting Hill Genesis and we look forward to seeing them move into leadership roles in future.

At the end of 2020, our director of procurement completed his nine-month development journey on the Leadership 2025 programme, which aims to increase the number of chief executives and other directors from BAME backgrounds across the housing sector. This prestigious programme is supported by the Mayor of London and offers a very limited number of places each year. Our investment finance director has secured a place on the December 2020 intake.

In February, two housing officers began the next chapters of their development journeys with UNIFY's Leadership Now programme. The

bespoke set of workshops, one-to-one coaching and development for new, aspiring and existing leaders, is designed to inspire individuals and organisations to seek the change we all want to see around diversity.

Also in February, we celebrated the success of staff in our housing and leasehold departments when five members of our home ownership team passed their Institute of Property Management exams, gaining a professional qualification that recognises their expertise. We also congratulated 25 housing officers on passing our internal progression process, which acknowledges the depth and breadth of their experience and skills, formally recognising them as experienced housing officers. They each presented to a panel of senior managers, successfully demonstrated their skills and knowledge, highlighted the positive impact their work has had on their residents and local communities and presented an idea for service improvement.

As well as celebrating these specific achievements, we also shared the career journeys of a range of staff throughout the year, showcasing the diversity of talent in our organisation. Colleagues in housing, IT and development have all inspired colleagues with stories of how they've challenged themselves to develop, overcome obstacles, and succeed.

We have extended and relaunched the ED&I component of our corporate induction to ensure that all new starters have the opportunity to learn about, discuss and share their thoughts on our approach to ED&I right at the beginning of their journey with us.

Staff network focus

PROUD@NHG

Our LGBTQ+ network had a strong year delivering an intersectional awareness-raising programme that championed the needs of both LGBTQ+ staff and residents.

Supported by PROUD@NHG, a group of our emerging leaders delivered our commitments under the HouseProud Pledge. On the staff side, promotion of our accreditation internally and externally demonstrates our commitment to equality and inclusion of LGBTQ+ individuals, letting current staff and potential applicants know that Notting Hill Genesis is a place where they can bring their whole selves to work.

LGBTQ+ History Month saw a series of events and articles that engaged hundreds of staff members and raised awareness of historic LGBTQ+ challenges and achievements, as well as present-day experiences. Colleagues shared their thoughts on the importance of bringing your whole self to work, counted down the 20 coolest things from LGBTQ+ history, and set out how the Stonewall uprising inspired today's Pride celebrations and the UK's gay liberation movement. We explored LGBTQ+ experiences through the arts at a screening and discussion of the film *Tangerine* and a presentation and discussion of LGBTQ+ literature led by Dr Emily Garside.

PROUD@NHG took an inclusive approach

Residents



Across our business areas, we provide access to housing and support for older people, those with physical disabilities, people experiencing mental ill health, and individuals and families from all backgrounds and walks of life. In 2020/21 this diverse heritage was showcased in our Every Kinda People podcasts, which documented and celebrated the ordinary and extra-ordinary life stories of our diverse residents.

Our new ED&I policy sets out our commitment to maintaining fairness and inclusivity as both an employer and a housing provider. It covers our understanding of equality, diversity and inclusion, and the approach we'll take to ensure that our residents, as well as our staff, are treated with the dignity and respect they deserve, whatever their protected or other characteristics. The policy

was developed in consultation with our involved residents and sets the foundations for our work in this area, which we will build on over the coming year.

We are working to address gaps in diversity data held on residents so we can better understand our different customer groups, their individual needs, and the best way to provide services to them. Our resident involvement team continuously seek to involve more residents from diverse backgrounds and walks of life in our various feedback and input initiatives and channels. Our disability forum sets out to represent the perspectives of residents with a range of health issues and disabilities, ensuring that their voices help to shape everything from the design of our homes to the delivery of our services. Our newly established LGBTQ+ resident forum provides a channel for LGBTQ+ residents to share their experiences and provide valuable input that allows us to tailor the support we provide and signpost LGBTQ+ residents to. One immediate change made following their feedback was to improve our signposting of specialist support for this, and other groups, where we had previously focused on more generic services.

ED&I is a central theme of our work with residents in our care homes and on our regeneration projects at the Aylesbury estate, Grahame Park and Woodberry Down. Our Clicksilver project provides an IT mentoring service, supporting residents of our care home services to connect

PROUD@NHG continued...

to their awareness raising by showcasing the diversity of individuals under the LGBTQ+ umbrella and exploring the impact of intersectionality. Moud Goba, director of community engagement at UK Black Pride, spoke to colleagues about the origins of UK Black Pride, the journey of the movement, and why it's still important today. Staff again discussed the intersection of sexual orientation and gender identity with ethnicity when they met to discuss Yoruba Richen's talk on what the gay rights movement learned from the civil rights movement.

In keeping with our corporate values of compassion, inclusion and empowerment, we are encouraging and supporting all colleagues to act as allies to those with less privilege. During LGBTQ+ History Month, we set out why LGBTQ+ allyship is important, and launched an evolving library of resources so staff can take the lead on self-educating and stepping up as allies.

In total, more than 50 staff joined remote events as part of LGBTQ+ History Month, and hundreds more accessed the articles and other resources published on Milo.

PROUD@NHG closed the year by embarking on a rebranding project aimed at driving further engagement that will support the network to continue to grow and thrive, and began work on our first submission to the Stonewall workplace equality index.

with others digitally, which has been a social lifeline to many during the pandemic. Our employment and training initiatives provide one-to-one pre-employment support and training, and volunteering opportunities. Commitments to creating apprenticeship opportunities for local people, and minimum targets for women and Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups help to increase the diversity of those benefiting from the job creation associated with regeneration.

At the Aylesbury estate, our Cuppa and Chat sessions aimed to address social isolation and promote community cohesion among local residents during the pandemic, and while they are open to all, promotion was specifically targeted towards older residents. January saw the launch of our intergenerational Home Is Where the Heart Is project, which encourages young people and older residents to share stories and experiences of living within the Aylesbury community. Work on our Kaleidoscope Journeys festival also began in January; the project aims to bring together the voices of local residents, with a focus on the stories of people from under-represented backgrounds, to be celebrated at a series of events in September 2021.

Across Grahame Park and Woodberry Down, our physical wellbeing programmes support residents to remain active as they grow older. Our community hoarding project is creating murals representing the diversity of the local community, with a mural dedicated to Black Lives Matter. Regular wellbeing checks with vulnerable residents address social isolation and provide signposting to online services and local support networks such as food banks and debt advice.

Staff network focus



Over the course of 2020/21, despite the challenges to staff engagement presented by the pandemic and multiple lockdowns, membership of **our women's network** increased by more than 40% to 117 staff, with many others contributing blogs, attending events and accessing information provided through awareness raising campaigns.

Beehive kicked off 2020/21 with All Talk and No Action, an International Women's Day event hosted in collaboration with L&Q, Peabody, Clarion and HouseProud. Chief executives and senior staff led discussion and responded to questions from more than 40 attendees, exploring what more can be done to advance gender equality within the housing sector.

After the successful relaunch of their menopause campaign in October 2020, the network continued to drive awareness raising and culture change around this important and yet still taboo women's health issue. Beehive's two menopause leads launched a toolkit of resources and hosted five menopause cafes in five months, attracting 25 different attendees. The cafes are a regular safe space for colleagues of all genders to learn from each other's experiences, provide mutual support and break down the silence and myths surrounding an issue that has a significant impact on women in the workplace.

In collaboration with the safeguarding team, Beehive recognised the UN's 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence with an impactful campaign. This included events delivered with Standing Together, the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance, Karma Nirvana and Sistah Space. A series of 10 staff blog posts highlighted the wide range of issues impacting women in the UK and around the world.

Beehive supported our Big Conversation by facilitating discussions attended by staff from across the organisation, and contributed an intersectional perspective to our Stop the Clock conference by facilitating sessions on unconscious bias and bringing your whole self to work.

2021 saw the redesign of the network's structure and a successful campaign to recruit steering group members to newly created posts. Beehive ended the year having appointed a new co-chair and five new steering group members. In an example of cross-network learning, Beehive adapted Cultural Energie's successful pillar approach to their own priorities, with a focus on skills, wellbeing and voice.



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