



Highlights report February 2026

Integrated Neighbourhood Teams

Last month, we updated you on our Integrated Neighbourhood Teams (INTs) briefing document, setting the principles for neighbourhood working. INTs are central to delivering the government's new Neighbourhood Health Service, helping to shift care from treatment to prevention.

We will take this document to the NEL ICB Neighbourhoods Steering Group in April/May 2026 and how these can be implemented in practice. We'd like to hear from you with any insights or experiences you have of engaging in neighbourhood working. Please get in touch at nelvcse@thcvs.org.uk. You can find our INTs briefing document [here](#).



Update on NHSE Neighbourhood National Implementor Pilot (NNHIP)

Barking & Dagenham's approach to the NNHIP is grounded in six years of VCFSE led social infrastructure, with the [BD Collective](#) championing proactive, person-centred, neighbourhood-based care rooted in resident leadership and co-production rather than consultation. Through Integrated Neighbourhood Teams, partners prioritise trust, relationships and asset-based approaches, using tools such as "Doing With, Not To" benchmarking, ethnographic workshops and consent-based decision-making to share power. BD Collective Health Networks are being established in each neighbourhood, linked to INTs and supported by VCFSE health connector roles, ensuring sustained collaboration and resident-led co-production. This strong, community-led social infrastructure was central to Barking & Dagenham's selection as an NNHIP vanguard area, with the VCFSE-led relational model shaping conditions for system-wide transformation.



Newham Neighbourhood Engagement Workshop

A Newham neighbourhood engagement event was held at Stratford Town Hall, organised by statutory partners and attended by over 150 participants from across health services, the local authority, local business and the VCFSE sector.

Peter Laing, Newham's place-based representative for the NEL VCFSE collaborative set out key principles for engaging with the borough's VCFSE sector within Integrated Neighbourhood Teams, highlighting the importance of early involvement, fair resourcing, shared leadership and genuine co-production. Discussions highlighted the urgency of tackling widening health inequalities and the need to build a more connected and prevention focussed system that invests in community assets.

There was positive momentum and participants recognised the challenge of turning shared ambition into practical changes in commissioning, governance and everyday partnership working.

Workforce development grant

Round 2 launched in early January, offering grants of up to £250 for individual professional development to strengthen the VCFSE sector's ability to tackle health inequalities across North East London. The workforce development grant, funded by the NEL Health Equity Academy aims to build the sector's capacity, knowledge, skills and confidence. To apply, click [here](#).

The other parts of this funding are:

Community of Practice – [Compost London](#)

Compost London are holding a series of community of practice designed to reduce health inequalities across North East London. Earlier this month, Compost London held their first session online which brought together 26 participants and focused on "Setting the Landscape" through exploring the NHS and Health & Social Care landscape and partnership working with the VCFSE sector. Speakers included representatives from Newham Local Authority, the NEL VCFSE Collaborative, and NEL ICB. If you would like to attend the second community of practice session on Thursday March 12th, please contact us at nelvcse@thcvs.org.uk.

Knowledge Share – [Community Action Redbridge](#)

Community Action Redbridge is developing practical guidance and knowledge resources to support VCFSE organisations in building sustainability, strengthening capacity and maximising opportunities to address health inequalities across NEL. As part of the Health Equity Academy funded work supported by the NEL VCFSE Collaborative, Community Action Redbridge is delivering a series of training sessions in March:



- Turning Conversations into Data**
Delivered by: Superhighways
Overview: Practical techniques to turn community conversations and engagement into robust qualitative evidence to influence services and health priorities.
Date: Tuesday 3 March 2026
Time: 10:00 to 13:00
Platform: Zoom
Registration: [Register here](#)
- Analysing and Interpreting Data**
Delivered by: Superhighways
Overview: Build confidence in using health data and community insight to inform decisions, strengthen funding bids, and demonstrate impact.
Date: Tuesday 17 March 2026
Time: 10:00 to 13:00
Platform: Zoom
Registration: [Register here](#)
- Designing and Delivering Theory of Change**
Delivered by: La Toyah McAllister-Jones, Independent Consultant
Overview: Learn how to map activities, outputs, and outcomes into a clear Theory of Change to evidence impact and reduce health inequalities.
Date: Friday 20 March 2026
Time: 10:00 to 13:00
Platform: Microsoft Teams
Registration: [Register here](#)

NEL Integrated Care Board

Our Partnership Development Director, Najnin Islam, represented the sector at the recent ICB Board meeting in January. The Board highlighted the role of VCFSE in commissioning plans and its central place in the vision for integrated neighbourhood working. Najnin emphasised the need for mechanisms in the future commissioning landscape to better support grassroots and community-led organisations, a point that was welcomed by the Board. The ICB has committed to working closely with the VCFSE Collaborative to take this forward.

Care Closer to Home (CCTH) update

Last month we provided an update on the Care Closer to Home Programme where we convened a range of VCFSE providers. There was also a call for a clear and shared system-wide definition of “prevention” that reflects real social drivers of health, better coordination across neighbourhoods, and greater recognition of the measurable system value the VCFSE contributes.

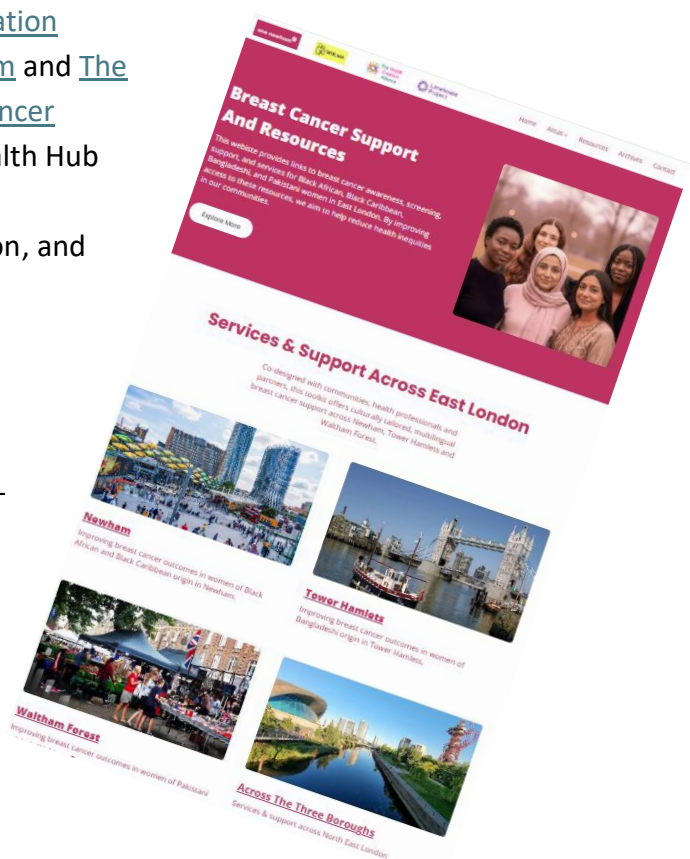
Recommendations focused on embedding the VCFSE fully within pathway design, commissioning processes, and governance. This includes commissioning VCFSE roles in discharge and prevention pathways, moving to multiyear and proportionate funding to strengthen community capacity, and ensuring lived experience is genuinely embedded in decision-making. There’s a virtual workshop on Tuesday 24th February 9am – 10.30am. If you would like to join, please contact us at nelvcs@thcvs.org.uk and we will connect you with the organisers.

Breast Cancer Toolkit Launch Event

On 12 February, with support from the [Health Creation Alliance](#), [WILMA Health](#) and partners [One Newham](#) and [The Limehouse Project](#) proudly launched the [Breast Cancer Awareness Toolkit](#) at the UEL Neighbourhoods Health Hub in Stratford (E15). The toolkit marks the extensive collaboration, community research and consultation, and has been developed to address health inequalities experienced by breast cancer survivors.

The toolkit features culturally relevant and appropriate resources designed to benefit people from all backgrounds, with a specific focus on Afro-Caribbean women in Newham, Pakistani women in Waltham Forest, and Bangladeshi women in Tower Hamlets.

The launch was a great success with culturally representative food and a chair yoga session reflecting the project’s holistic, community-centred approach. The toolkit will operate as a live repository with regular updates and signposting users to a wide range of additional support and resources.



State of the Sector report presentation

On 3 February 2026, JJ Khun, our Workforce and Volunteers representative, presented the [State of the Sector](#) report to a large gathering of Waltham Forest voluntary organisations, joined by the Cabinet Lead for Communities and council officers. The presentation was very well received, with local authority representatives describing the findings as insightful and the VCSFE sector offering strong positive feedback. JJ highlighted key challenges, particularly barriers to suitable premises, storage and accessible venues for creative health delivery, issues that can hinder progress on reducing health inequalities. JJ will share the report again at a Hackney network meeting before March.

Gamifying Democracy event – Partnership for Young London

Partnership for Young London are running “[Gamifying Democracy](#)” on 4 March 2026, a free online training for youth practitioners. The session shares practical games and activities to help youth workers and educators spark conversations about politics and democratic participation with young people, supporting them to explore their power, voice and ideas for change. [Register here](#).

Loved and Wanted Campaign – Community Spaces

The Loved and Wanted Campaign is aiming to create a city-wide network of welcoming community spaces across London. Backed by £1.8 million from the Mayor of London and The National Lottery Community Fund, the campaign supports spaces where people can connect, try new activities, celebrate local communities, and access advice and support. These spaces offer safe and supportive places to meet and connect. [To find a community space, click here](#).

If you have any questions about the updates above, please email nelvcse@thcvs.org.uk. A list of representatives can be found [here](#).



Voluntary, community, faith & social enterprise organisations working with the NHS across North East London:

