



## Context

- London is the largest city in the UK and third largest in Europe, with a population of over nine million. It is also one of the most ethnically diverse cities in the world, with over 300 languages spoken.
- Poor mental health is one of the biggest challenges facing London. Approximately 2 million Londoners experience poor mental health every year and London continues to report some of the lowest life satisfaction scores in the UK.
- Poor mental health is both a cause and consequence of inequality and prevalence is often much higher in the communities facing most inequalities, including people living in poverty or those who have experienced discrimination or adversity.
- However, whilst it is important to acknowledge and address the challenges individuals and communities face, we know that London is a city rich with resources and assets which promote health, happiness and resilience, protect against negative health outcomes, and help to reduce health inequalities.
- In July 2017, the Mayor of London, alongside health and care partners, launched [Thrive LDN](#) – a citywide movement to ensure all Londoners have an equal opportunity to good mental health and wellbeing – with the publication of [Towards happier, healthier lives](#) and the [Are we OK London? campaign](#).

## Approach

- Informed by social movement theory, our approach is to effectively advance social change through a blend of bottom-up and top-down approaches. In practice this means our Theory of Changes operates across a networked system in order to generate scalable and sustainable change for Londoners.
- As a participation-driven partnership we support a community of individuals and organisations from across the health and care system and the voluntary and community sectors who can mobilise this transformation.
- The support for this approach from Thrive LDN's partners, combined with the active engagement of Londoners, has enabled us to adopt an agile approach to development and delivery. The way we work is not a smooth, linear process, but rather an iterative one, with each stage potentially informing the others.
- Our Theory of Changes outline several pre-conditions, which enable all decisions and activities:
  - **Participation:** Participation is the driving force of Thrive LDN. Londoners need to be motivated, able and prompted to take action, and at the centre of all action. Participatory approaches directly address the marginalisation and powerlessness caused by entrenched health inequalities.
  - **Partnerships:** Partnerships are the firm foundations from which we can build sustained, collective action. A multidisciplinary and cross-sector approach must be adopted as no one discipline has all the knowledge or power to affect the required level of change.
  - **Distributed leadership:** Distributed, multi-level leadership, with a degree of autonomy, is important. Thrive LDN requires ongoing leadership from the Mayor of London and London Health Board partners to succeed. More broadly, Thrive LDN

needs to value and develop diverse leadership that operates in different ways, including from Londoners themselves.

- **Proportionate universalism:** Although mental health affects everyone, it doesn't do so equally. Therefore, all activity must take a proportionate universalism approach, by addressing the whole population and providing bespoke support for individuals, communities and groups who need it.
- **Power:** Prevailing power relations and systems of oppressions are a significant barrier to create change and achieve our ultimate goal. These will need to be confronted, challenged and improved if we are to succeed.

## Brief highlights

- Thrive LDN has seen rapid growth since our public launch in 2017, becoming a complex collection of partnerships, projects and activities. Many have come about due to our open approach to participation and partnerships.

## Participation

- In 2016, in partnership with [Mental Health Foundation](#), we [published](#) a report into the prevalence of determinants and mental health inequalities in London. In response, we facilitated over 40 [Problem Solving Booths](#) and [community conversations](#) in half of London boroughs, and conducted a meta-analysis of findings titled [Londoners said](#).
- To mark World Mental Health Day on 10 October, every year Thrive LDN and the Mayor of London's Peer Outreach Team, host a young Londoner-led festival. The theme for this year's (virtual) festival was virtual and the theme was supporting young Londoners to build resilience and promote positive wellbeing. More than 100 young people were involved in developing and delivering the festival programme and more than 1,000 people accessed the range of performances, panel discussions, workshops and resources on the day. Further information can be found [here](#).

## Young Londoners

- [Young London Inspired](#) is a volunteering and social action grants scheme to support young Londoners at greater risk of poor mental health, with the aim of supporting them to develop their skills and confidence, build self-esteem and improve their mental health and wellbeing. The grants scheme is delivered in partnership with Team London and the #iwill Fund, supported by the Big Lottery Fund. Overall, 33 organisations have been awarded grants so far. An evaluation of projects in Year 1 found that 63% of young people reported improved wellbeing.
- Funded by the Mayor's Young Londoners' Fund, Thrive LDN is delivering [Youth Mental Health First Aid training](#) to every school, college and university in London, along with other youth setting. The programme is due to be complete in March 2021 and is being evaluated by University College London.

## Right to Thrive

- [Right to Thrive](#) is Thrive LDN's ongoing commitment to celebrate and protect diversity in London, especially for those at higher risk of unfair treatment based on their identity, beliefs or social class. We undertake extensive community engagement and research with disproportionately at-risk communities to then co-develop projects, activities and campaigns.
- In 2019 we launched the [Right to Thrive grants scheme](#) and to date have awarded £200,000 worth of grants to support community-led mental health projects with and for intersectional and marginalised groups.

## Suicide Prevention

- Thrive LDN have been the regional lead for suicide prevention on behalf of NHS England since 2018 and have an extensive [Suicide Prevention programme](#).
- We have developed the UK's first multi-agency, timely Information Sharing Hub on suspected suicides and, at a later stage, attempted suicides in London.
- We deliver free Suicide Prevention training to schools, colleges and universities in London.
- On World Suicide Prevention Day 2019, in partnership with the Mayor of London, we launched the [#ZeroSuicideLDN campaign](#) to encourage 100,000 Londoners to complete free suicide prevention training within a year – over 150,000 Londoners have completed the training to date.

## Evaluation

- In January 2020, we published [London's progress towards happier, healthier lives: Thrive LDN insights](#).

## Coronavirus pandemic

- The coronavirus pandemic is already having a significant impact on people's mental health and wellbeing and will have profound psychological consequences in the longer term.
- Since March 2020, Thrive LDN have also been coordinating the public mental health response to the coronavirus pandemic on behalf of Public Health England London and wider partners, with the aim of ensuring London's diverse communities have the strength and resilience to cope with and overcome unprecedented events.
- Thrive LDN was ideally placed to lead the coordinated public mental health response and we rose to the challenge and rapidly mobilised a wide-ranging and considered response on behalf of partners.
- As part of Thrive LDN's role to coordinate the public mental health response to COVID-19 on behalf of Public Health England London and wider partners, we are producing regular [working papers](#) on the known impact of COVID-19 on Londoners' mental health and wellbeing, implications for transition and recovery planning, and suggested actions we take.
- Thrive LDN, in partnership with Doctors of the World and the Mayor of London, have produced [wellbeing guidance and support in 27 languages](#).
- We developed a coordinated bereavement support plan and suicide prevention plan for London with key partners.
- We develop [psychosocial guidance](#) to support community and faith leaders to support those adversely affected by the pandemic.
- In partnership with London Councils and Voluntary Hubs we supported vulnerable and shielding non-digitally-active Londoners by [distributing 96,000 leaflets](#) through local volunteer networks.
- We mobilised a [mental health poster campaign](#) on the Transport for London (TfL) network.
- In partnership with Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) clinicians, we developed a [Coping well during COVID-19](#) webinar series and a [Keeping Well for health and care workers webinar series](#).
- We publish regular [Communications Toolkits](#) for partners which includes public mental health messages and signposting to support.
- We supported [Good Thinking](#), London's digital mental wellbeing service, to mobilise a comprehensive digital support offer.

## Understanding more about the experiences of disproportionately at-risk groups

- Many Londoners entered the pandemic from positions of disadvantage and evidence is increasing that the pandemic has widened mental health inequalities; groups that had the poorest mental health pre-crisis had the largest deterioration in mental health during lockdown. However, there is a lack of representative and granular information available on the experiences and needs of disadvantaged communities in London, leading to a significant barrier to understanding the action required to create positive change.
- In direct response to this, Thrive LDN undertook our largest and most ambitious single community engagement project to date – working with 200 different community groups and organisations to listen to the voices of over 10,000 Londoners to understand more about the experiences of 20 disproportionately at-risk groups.
- We are keen to stress that this work is ongoing, and the findings and suggested actions are a working draft at this present time, shared due to the urgency of the current situation and to avoid delaying meaningful action.
- However, [early findings from the analysis](#) indicate that, for many communities across London, the coronavirus pandemic is seen as the latest crisis event in a crisis trend – a steadily worsening series of situations disadvantaged communities across London face. This is against a backdrop of vital conditions for wellbeing resilience being eroded over time and a fear for what's to come – be that a worsening pandemic, winter challenges, uncertainty over income and employment or Brexit.
- The findings also illustrate a general sense of loss across all aspects of many Londoners' lives: loss of loved ones, employment, relationships, homes, education and wider opportunities. However, there is also a definite theme of hope. Communities disproportionately affected by the coronavirus pandemic, who already experienced poorer social, economic and health outcomes, identified the significance of family and support structures, and the support offered by wider community and faith groups. Early findings show a clear relationship between resilience and coping with uncertainty, and the power of relationships, collectivising, and social networks.
- The report suggests actions against eight themes – (1) Strengthen community; (2) Address discrimination; (3) Balance uncertainty for the future; (4) Financial security; (5) Value family and support structures; (6) Digital inclusion; (7) Improve access to information advice and support; and (8) Commit to delivering change for Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities.
- Whilst this work is ongoing, it is important for Thrive LDN to consider how we best use the existing resources and partnerships we have to respond to findings and suggested actions so far, to support London communities to build their strength and resilience to cope with what is likely to be a protracted second wave and future unprecedented events.
- Grounded in sharing findings from community insights back with participants themselves, Thrive LDN are co-designing additional participatory processes, infrastructure and action research projects to widen and deepen participation further.
- We are currently expanding our Right to Thrive programme to offer additional support and development opportunities to grassroots groups and take further action to advance equality and ensure more equal access to opportunities.
- Thrive LDN is co-designing an emotional resilience and resilience promotion programme to support Londoners to cope better with uncertainty and overcome future unprecedented events.

## Get involved

- Website: [www.thriveldn.co.uk](http://www.thriveldn.co.uk)
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