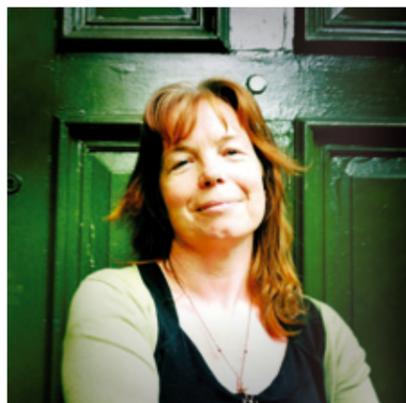


Believe in better. Believe in equality.
Believe in social justice for the
people of East London. Listen and
learn from their problems. Help
them discover their potential. Use
creativity, ingenuity and verve to
rise to the challenge. Be determined.
Take action. Test ideas. Measure the
change and share what works. Aim
high. Raise dignity, aspirations and
income. Poverty must not stand.

Be prepared to take the hard road.
Be resourceful, smart & courageous.
Stand tall. Stand proud. Nurture
talents, strengths & capabilities of
others. Help people to help themselves
with integrity, positivity & purpose.

Working for a just world, where
people put people first.

Mue
2012



Judith Moran
QSA Director

Hello and welcome to our Annual Report,

This is my tenth annual report as QSA's director. Looking back much has changed in the last decade, but much has stayed the same. Ten years ago, our economy was more buoyant, consumer confidence was high and, while there remained a need for anti-poverty services that addressed tangible issues of material poverty, there was also ample opportunity to develop more creative responses. Now we are in the depths of a recession, struggling to see when and how our economy will bounce back, with relentless news of utter desperation and destitution from within our poorest communities.

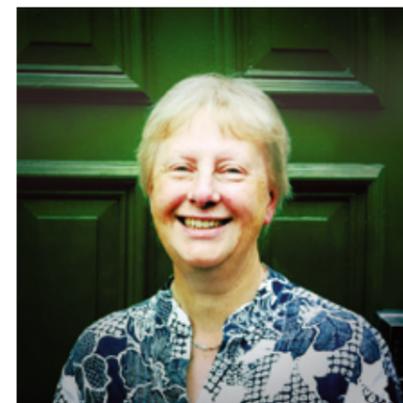
What haven't changed are the attributes of the people we work with. The Gentle Author, an anonymous blog writer who tells a true story of an ordinary east Londoner every day, says of these boroughs "Truly, all of human life is here" and marvels at the self-respect and resourcefulness within the residents of east London. The Gentle Author states a desire to write stories that are worthy of their subjects and I feel a similar obligation: that the services we offer are worthy of our service users. I have heard many stories of kindness, tenacity and resilience in my decade as director and I believe we have an obligation to be the very best organisation we can be, to do justice to the people we work with.

I hope you find evidence of that within these pages.

Kindest regards,

Contents

- 4/7: Introduction and thanks
- 8/11: Homestore
- 12 / 15: Homelink
- 16 / 17: Our impact
- 18 / 21: Knees Up
- 22 / 25: Down to Earth
- 26 / 29: Made of Money
- 30 / 31: Summary financial statements



Joycelin Dawes
Chair of Trustees

Dear Friends,

Quakers have a reputation for doggedly staying the course, quietly working on issues that engage their passion and commitment. It's especially challenging in the current climate of economic uncertainty and deep cuts across the services and benefits so vital for people on low incomes.

I have huge respect for the way people living on a low income endure, with the dignity they muster; for charities and their staff – such as QSA – finding new ways to raise money and innovate in supporting people's desire to build a better life for themselves and their family; and the Trustees I'm blessed to serve who are extraordinary for the generosity of spirit and love they bring to their work for QSA. It all takes endurance, and a vitalising combination of creative vision and resilience.

As I write the largest civil society event in the world is taking place, centred in an east London borough we serve. My wish would be that we – Britain as a whole – would bring the same drive, commitment and creative enterprise to resolving the issues of poverty that so beset many, many residents of the streets around the Olympic Park: "To go higher, stronger, faster" – in rooting out poverty.

Best wishes,

East end poverty

The times they aren't-a-changing...

QSA has had a presence in east London for nearly 150 years. Like many socially minded people in the late 19th century, Quakers looked at the area's slum housing, squalid living conditions and the paucity of life choices and felt called to act. Such interventions are sadly still needed, and the essence of that same impulse remains within QSA – to listen to the needs of the community and find ways to support people on a very practical level. We see ourselves as a responsive organisation and we aim to meet old needs in new ways, or emerging needs in innovative ways. Although what we actually do has changed over the years, those founding Quaker values – that we all deserve an equal chance to thrive – are the deep foundations upon which our work is built today.

If we compare that east London of the 1860s to the one we inhabit now, it feels in some ways as though little has changed. The living standards of some of our fellow citizens are deplorable and the narrative of the 'deserving' and 'undeserving' poor is still being played out, albeit under the guise of 'the working poor' versus 'benefit scroungers'. As the impact of the recession continues to bite, low income households are being hit by a perfect storm of cuts coupled with spiralling rents, food prices and utility bills. Food banks have already had to feed twice as many mouths in the last year alone, up to 128,697 households in 2011/12; and this is before most planned welfare benefit cuts have been rolled out.

This is all set against a background of stagnating wages and deepening unemployment. There are now more than 425,000 unemployed Londoners, the highest level for well over 15 years, increasing at a rate that is out of pace with the national average. In total, 900,000 working-age adults are either unemployed, economically inactive but wanting a job, or underemployed but unable to find a full time position. For those that are in work, wages offer no guaranteed escape route from poverty; nearly 50 per cent of young adults are paid less than the London Living Wage, and over the last decade 60 per cent more families with at least one working adult have been classed as 'low income'.

QSA clients tell of almost unimaginable experiences of scraping by on the breadline – such as Homestore customer Ricky, who got through the winter by keeping his curtains closed to try to insulate his uncarpeted home, just so he could afford to meet crippling debt repayments without going hungry.

This is life lived on a cliff edge with no margin for error, where even a small amount of bad luck, such as a broken washing machine, can snowball into a financial catastrophe. Some people take desperate measures – in 2011 nearly one million Britons are estimated to have taken out payday loans to pay their rent or mortgage, a perilous juggling act that can lead to repossession and eviction.

Some of QSA's projects offer very straightforward and direct interventions to such material needs – we secure tenancies for homeless young adults, provide good quality used furniture to people whose homes lack basic goods, and we support those facing the twin hardships of poverty and bereavement to arrange an affordable, but meaningful funeral.

Read more about these projects:

[Homelink](#) is on pages 12 to 15, [Homestore](#) on pages 8 to 11, and [Down to Earth](#) on pages 22 to 25.

Ralph Waldo Emerson said "It's not length of life, but depth of life", and we have often reflected on this in the last year when seeking to affirm our view that life is about engaging and flourishing. We see mere survival as a poor aspiration for a civilised society that purports to believe in equality. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation's Minimum Income Standards take this view to very practical conclusions by asking ordinary members of the public what they need to have an ordinary life – a life that means not just surviving, but participating in society. These calculations show that even the most basic of social and civic engagement requires an income much higher than the benefit threshold; as a society we are collectively excluding many households from a more meaningful life.

QSA's other projects address this poverty of choice, confidence, control and connections. We support parents and children to explore their values and assumptions about money, as well as to gain straightforward money management skills, equipping them to cope better with the demands of day-to-day household finances. We also work alongside residents of deprived estates, helping them to build neighbourliness, community spirit and aspiration, then to join forces to address local problems.

Read more about these projects:

[Made of Money](#) on pages 26 to 29, and [Knees Up](#) on pages 18 to 21.



"It is not length of life, but depth of life."

Ralph Waldo Emerson

QSA today

Redoubling our efforts... in a double dip recession

Our response to the challenges of the recession and welfare benefit cuts has been to work harder than ever to deliver essential services, as well as thinking carefully about what else we could offer when the challenges seem so great. We reached 3,011 households across east London this year, nearly 10 per cent more than the year before.

Launched in May 2012, our newest project, This Way Up, coaches people to work towards goals that are realistic in this current climate but, moreover, supports them to strengthen their mental wellbeing, coping skills and resilience.

We have continued to share our learning on a national stage wherever possible. This happens practically – we have now trained over 200 people across the UK about the philosophy and practicalities of delivering our Made of Money model to tackle financial exclusion (read more about this on page 27).

It also happens when we find ways to connect our service users with those from the media or academia who are shining a light on the issues they face, so their voices can be heard and their reality shared.

We know that we are a small charity, equipped to offer a limited response to some very large challenges. It would have been tempting to shrug our shoulders in this recession, simply overwhelmed by the sheer scale of the task before us. Yet it is with great pride that within this annual report, we show you what we have delivered and the impact we have made.

To see more statistics about QSA's impact over the course of the year, turn to the centre pages of this report.



Thank you

Thanks to all our volunteers:

Husayn Abraham
Michael Albany
Akbar Ali
Saidul Alom
Abdul Aziz
Sulthana Begum
Shahara Begum
Anne-Marie Brenckle
Jo Brereton
Joan Browne
Andrew Cameron
Hugh Canavan
David Carter
Eleanor Chiari
Juber Choudhury
Lynne Cornell
Sharon Cornfield
Madonna Coward
Rory Cullen
Kris Day
Djamila De Carvalho
Dorin Dragu
James Dupont
Teresa Durkin
Isabel Elliot
David Elton
Annie Evans
Kim Farley
Annette Furley
Jonathan Gabriel
Clotilde Gnahore
Clode Gnahore
Jo Goodman
Bernadette Hawkes
Lina Hegazi
Harold Hibbert
Lara Houston
Bobette Kalongosi
Jamie King
Helena Konneh
George Kwofie
Paris Levy
Marriette Lukwago
Jayne Mace
Aliz Manzak-Nagy
Zoe Martin
Andrew Mason
Peter McCabe
Ranee Meah
Diana Menville
June Miller
Teresa Mustapha
Meena Nair
Arafat Ndejeya
Mariama Touray Njie
Nim Njuguna
Sandrine Nkombengnomdo
Viwe Nkonki
Talula Noor
Ibrahim Nour
Bafuafua Nyanou
Gloria Ogunbadejo
Bridget Okafor-Nduba
Akin Oriola
Rosamund Parker
Tony Piper
Nick Pritchard
Dean Pursell

Shueb Rahman
Randall Raveneau
Marika Raveneau
Lucille Reid
Roy Rekhaye
Maura Robinson-Daugirda
Debi Runeckles
Adeel Saleem
Miffa Salter
Natasha Sazhineva
Sully Shah
Christine Sirven
Margaret Anne Smith
Collette Smith
Michael Soden
Than Than Soe
Tim Segaller
Pete Southern
Sonia Spencer
Simon Spencer-Cusick
Roselyn Springer
Stan Stevenson
Adrian Super
Laure Tcheuko
Paula Teixeira
Huw Thomas
Pete Thomas
Catherine Utley
Lorna Verran
Jenny Whatmore-Eve
Jill Williams
Steve Woodford
Maria Woodroffe
Mark Zorichak

Thanks to our partners and those who have given of their time and expertise:

Allyson Mathews – Tower Hamlets Homes
Anchor House
Burdette Neighbourhood Centre
Cherry Trees Primary School
Clarence Estates Ltd
Clerkenwell Primary School
East London Strategic Alliance for a good death and the very best bereavement care
Family Intervention Project
Forest Recycling Project
Globe Primary School
Globetown Learning Community
Hackney Council
Highbury Quadrant Primary School
Holy Family Primary School
Hornsey Road Children's Centre
Hugh Middleton Primary School
Ian Mikardo Secondary School
Islington Council
Islington Families
John Smith Children's Centre

Langdon Park Secondary School
Lawdale Primary School
LB Hackney Benefits and Housing Needs Service
LB Tower Hamlets Benefits Service
LB Tower Hamlets Housing Options Service
Lighthouse Furniture Project
London Fire Brigade
Malmesbury Primary School
Morningside Primary School
New Hanbury Project
Ocean Childrens Centre
Omnicom Media Group
Our Lady Primary School
Parent House
Peabody Trust
Poplar Harca
PRAXIS
Prior Weston School
Robert Blaie Primary School
Saint Vincent de Paul Society
School Home Support
Sebright Children's Centre
Sebright Primary
Seetec
Seven Mills Primary School
Shanks
Shapla Primary School
St John's Primary School
St Joseph's Hospice
St Mathias School
St John St James Primary School
Stebon Primary School
Stewart Headlam Primary School
Sundial Centre
UrbanCanda
Wellington Primary School
Woolmore Primary School

...and all the referral agencies and landlords that support Homelink, Homestore and Down to Earth!

Thanks to our staff:

Dinar Ali
Rousha Browning
Natacha Bryan
Jim Carling
Ramona Doherty
Marika van Harskamp
Delberth Hemley
Sarah Hind
Sheila Hinton
Mike Jordan
Irina Joseph
Jon Kelly
Lawrence Kilshaw
Kristina Leonnet
Rosie Marteau
Stephen Matthews
Karen McBye
Judith Moran

Shaun Powell
David Rigby
Tim Segaller
Gerry Smith
Natalie Taylor
Alison Tsang

...and to those we said goodbye to in 2011/12:

Helen Gale
Brenda James
Russell Ogston
Collette Smith
Catherine Utley
Clive Whitehouse

Thanks to our trustees:

Gillian Ashmore
Joycelin Dawes
David Hickok
Jim Howson
James Robertson
Colleen Stretch
Caroline Tisdall

...and to those we said goodbye to in 2011/12:

Stephan Ball
Sandy Horsfall
Nick Putz
Lizz Roe
Anne Sofer

Thanks to our funders £5,000 or over: Trusts, Foundations & Corporates:

29th May 1961 Charitable Trust
The AB Charitable Trust
Britannia Building Society
Community Foundation
Centre for Social Justice
CB & HH Taylor 1984 Trust
Chiron Trust
CHK Charities Ltd
City Bridge Trust
Dulverton Trust
Esmee Fairbairn Charitable Trust
Friends Provident Charitable Foundation
Garfield Weston Foundation
Hadley Trust
Henry Smith Charity
JP Morgan Foundation
John Paul Getty Jnr Charitable Trust
Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust
Kelly Family Charitable Trust
London Catalyst
London Quaker Service Trust
Mercers' Company
Merchant Taylors' Company
Molly Bown Legacy Trust
M&G Group
Rayne Foundation
Rowan Charitable Trust
Sir Halley Stewart Trust
Stanley Thomas Johnson

St John Southworth Fund
Swan Foundation
Tower Hill Trust
Trust for London
Tudor Trust
WF Southall Trust
Zernager

Public Funders:

Crisis – PRS Access
Development Programme
Department of Work & Pensions
London Borough of Hackney
London Borough of Islington
London Borough of Tower Hamlets – One Tower Hamlets Fund 2010
London Councils – ESF Co-financing Programme 2010/2012
NIACE – Adult & Community Learning Fund
North London Waste Authority

Thanks to our supporters:

A huge thank you for the £77,591 given by individual supporters, and the £14,293 donated by Quaker Meetings. It really does make all the difference.

Homestore

A lifeline for people struggling to afford basic household essentials

In the last few years, the cost of living has skyrocketed above and beyond inflation, with prices of ordinary household goods rising at around twice the rate of wages. We are all getting by with less, and being forced to make tougher decisions about what it is that we want, and what it is that we need. For people on low incomes – especially in London's east end where 27 per cent of children in Tower Hamlets are in severe poverty – those decisions have become even more brutal, with families having to make the most difficult of choices: between heating their home or having enough beds for everyone to sleep in.

Homestore exists to alleviate this burden, so that those who struggle don't have to make impossible choices. Running since 1988, Homestore has served the community through good times and bad, offering good quality furniture and household goods at very affordable value to low income individuals and families. The project engages with people right across the changing face of east London, from the homeowners who donate unwanted furniture and the volunteers who give their time, to the households in need of benefit. This is one of Homestore's great strengths: it is a sustainable community project delivered by and for local people.

In a recent survey, 60 per cent of our referral agencies reported a rise in demand for Homestore's services among their clients in the past year, with the remaining 40 per cent indicating no sign of a decline. Homestore has risen to the challenge of this growing need by supporting more households than ever before to save money. For vulnerable people whose lives have been blighted by illness, domestic violence and homelessness, Homestore is a lifeline that not only provides furniture, but also builds a home.

Meeting the need

The economic downturn has seen Homestore standing strong in the face of adversity and opening its doors to many new customers. In the year 2011/12 Homestore helped 1,881 households with 2,104 dependent adults and children, 22 per cent more than the year before. This included vulnerable people such as Mary – a disabled parent living with a dependent child – who thanks to Homestore furnished her home whilst also avoiding debt. Responses received from feedback surveys and questionnaires carried out this year found:

- 93 per cent of customers agreed that Homestore has improved their quality of life, and rated its service as 'good' or 'excellent'.
- 78 per cent said shopping at Homestore had saved them money, with another 27 per cent reporting that it had prevented debt or stopped existing debt from increasing.



A single person on benefits, at 40% of the minimum income standard, spends around 16% of their income on household goods, almost a fifth of their weekly outgoings.

Source: JRF, 2012



In Tower Hamlets alone, 12,000 children live with a family income of less than 50% of the national average and lack "at least one basic necessity", such as fridges, washing machines and furnishings.

Source: Save the Children, 2011

Homestore always charges around a third of the cost of other second hand stores – with the average dining table and chairs priced at just £10, its furniture is accessible even to those on the lowest incomes. There is a financial benefit for furniture donors too: we don't charge for collection, saving them the cost of paying the council to remove unwanted goods. This year we saved customers and donors a total of £245,000, a 30 per cent increase on last year's total. Of this sum, £181,349 benefited our low income customers. We estimate that this brings the total savings, since the project first opened its doors back in the late 1980s, to well over £3 million.

Improving the service

Homestore has introduced several new features to its service in 2011/12, including a gift aid tax rebate available on all furniture donations and the installation of debit and credit card payment facilities. In response to customer demand, the project has also started selling new beds for very affordable value, an initiative which has been extremely successful.

In terms of partnership work, Homestore has continued its strong relationship with the London Fire Brigade, with around 20 per cent of its customers taking up free health and safety checks for their homes. The project also continues to be a member of the Furniture Reuse Network, and during their recent audit, it was noted that Homestore's furniture was the cheapest the auditor had seen in the country. Environmental and conservation targets are as important as ever, and in the past year we have saved over 149 tonnes of rubbish from landfill sites, nine more tonnes than in 2010/11.



"My department works with families who have limited means. Homestore allows our service users to be able to purchase cheap furniture in good condition. It is a brilliant service."

Source: Newham Child Youth Protection Services

Plans for 2012/13

In the year to come Homestore is preparing to work even harder as we see the need of the communities we serve continue to rise. We plan to:

- Enrol 1,320 new service users and make 1,500 deliveries.
- Develop our position as a gateway organisation to other essential support services, such as food banks.
- Use an electronic questionnaire to improve feedback from referral agencies.
- Produce more volunteer training materials, an information pack for referral agencies and customer information in a variety of languages.

Making a difference: Mercedita & Victor

Mercedita:

"Things are hard for me as I have a twenty two year old son Victor who is severely autistic and also epileptic. I'm worried as every time he flies into a rage I have to stop him – when he's angry I'm worried he'll have a fit, he's not himself and I have to work really hard to calm him down by giving him a hug or singing a song. I receive a pension and my husband works full time as a concierge so we don't get any benefits for ourselves, for Victor we receive income capacity benefits and DLA, which helps, but hardly covers the cost of his food, clothes and carer – it's up to us to make up the rest.

In the last couple of years I've been feeling things getting harder. Moneywise, prices have gone up, but because I'm on a pension what I get is what I get every month, so it's really difficult. If I ever want a small treat for myself I have to think very hard – I might be spending that money on something I'll need later. I always have to consider Victor and put his needs first.

I heard about Homestore from my social worker who recommended it to me. I was getting very distressed as when Victor gets upset he often breaks things and I couldn't always afford to replace them, so for that reason Homestore has been magical for me! It's mostly second hand stuff but all really good things. I've bought tables and two sets of chairs as Victor often smashes those, even a bench that was brand new. It's good because it's too heavy for Victor to pick up and break! It was only £10 which is such a good price, if I had got it from another shop it would have been three times that. It made me happy to know that if something broke, I could replace it. The only unfortunate thing is that membership is only for a year as they want to give other families in a situation like mine a chance to use the service.

Homestore really, really helped me and really helped this family, especially when Victor was going through the worst of his violent phase."

Meet the volunteers: Ibrahim and Paula

In 2011/12 we gave valuable work experience to an average of 27 active volunteers a month, with 67 volunteering and seven trainee opportunities offered over the course of the year. We aim to make the experience as beneficial as possible by enabling individuals to gain useful skills and enhance their CV, giving them the edge in an increasingly squeezed and competitive job market. We'd like to thank our volunteers for giving a total of 1,435 days of their time this year, without which Homestore wouldn't be able to achieve its aims for people in need.

Ibrahim:

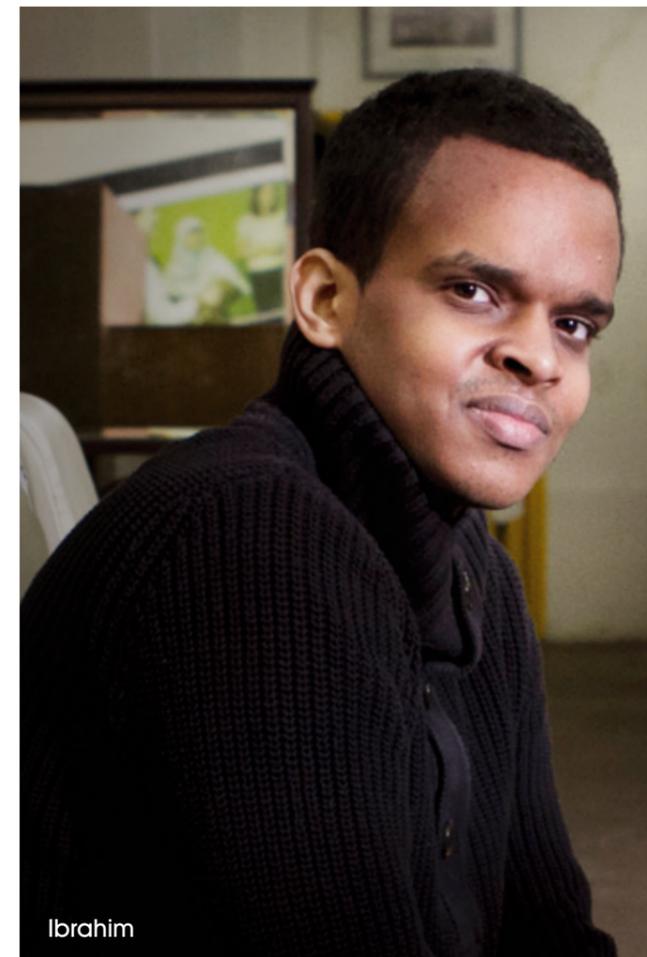
"I started working at Homestore in January, five months ago. I was a student who had just finished Uni but was having a hard time looking for a job. For years I lived in Plaistow and so just wanted to do something for the community I grew up in. I knew I wanted to go into some sort of administration or accountancy and I knew this would give me the experience I could use to get a job. You really feel like you're helping people, even more so during these hard times – things have been really active for Homestore recently."

Paula:

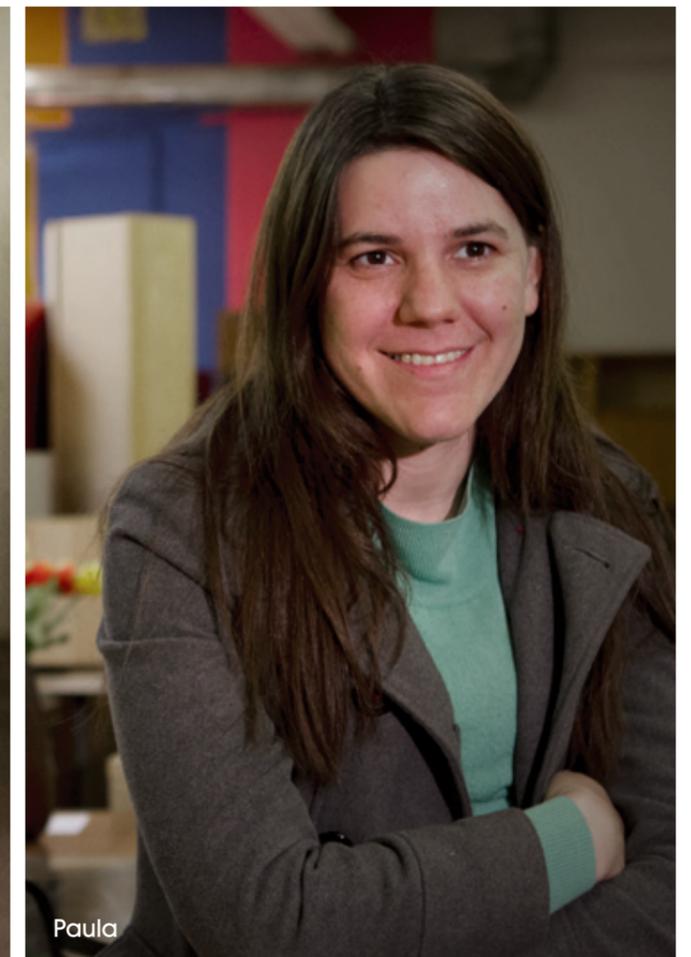
"I've been volunteering since October and come here three times a week. Before that I was just staying at home – I'm on income support and I've got two little kids. I knew about Homestore because I used to be a customer and got many things from them. One of the reasons I decided to volunteer was to practice my English as I am originally from Portugal. After a few months my confidence with the language is much better, especially in writing emails. I already have two months' work secured for the Olympics. I'll be working on the transport information desk, something I could never have done before."



Victor & Mercedita



Ibrahim



Paula

Homelink

Supporting young people to find a stable place to stay

Moving is about far more than simply changing places. For most young people, leaving home and becoming independent is about finding roots, identity and a sense of belonging, whilst for others, relationship breakdown and other problems can lead to homelessness, and the loss of them. It is an isolating and destructive experience, leaving many young people in bed and breakfasts, sofa surfing or living in unfit housing. We've heard stories this year of young people squatting old church buildings to avoid the streets and suffering financial abuse through informal renting in substandard accommodation.

As Homelink approaches its 18th birthday, this last year has been one of the hardest. We have continued to focus on helping people access sustainable accommodation, and young adults, aged 18 to 35, have become the largest group we support. We engage them one-on-one to build effective, trusting relationships, and through group workshops where they support each other in their search. However, in the current market, we have struggled to secure tenancies.

The lack of affordable accommodation frustrates attempts to escape homelessness, damages motivation and wastes public money. Rents are now so out of touch with wages that some tenants are spending over half of their income on accommodation, leaving little for food, fuel and other essentials. Housing benefit has also failed to keep up with market rates. The current Local Housing Allowance is often £30 - £40 less per week than the average price of a room – and this often does not

include bills. It is totally beyond the reach of our client group. While the full force of the housing benefit cuts introduced in January 2012 is yet to be felt, the government has proposed further reform. Thousands of tenants are stretched to the limit, praying they won't be hit by another rent rise or benefit cut that will tip them over the edge.

Meeting the need

Faced with increased demand for our services, in 2011/12 Homelink made a total of 618 interventions, ranging from employment advice and housing benefit eligibility checks to supporting people to find suitable accommodation – almost a five-fold increase on last year. Clients had spent an average of more than five months being homeless, with over half of them 'sofa surfing' with friends. A further 13 per cent were at risk of homelessness and facing eviction whilst 14 per cent were in a hostel and 8 per cent were on the street.

Homelink aimed to support 26 people to move into shared tenancies but unfortunately we were unable to fulfil this ambition. Although 21 found properties to view, only seven moved into a secure tenancy. With 17 years' experience delivering Homelink and good relationships with a wide variety of landlords, we never envisaged being able to secure so few tenancies. We anticipated a challenge, but were taken aback by the severe shortage of affordable accommodation in Hackney and Tower Hamlets for our client group, heightened by the rising demand caused by changes to housing benefit. Instead, we were able to support people with intensive assessments, advice

and a connection to other homeless support services. Faced with a dearth of private sector rented accommodation, in 2011/12 we also began to explore the option of lodgings and launched a campaign to find interested householders. We see this as a potential win-win situation: providing additional income for households with a spare room whilst housing a prospective tenant, who is certified and supported by Homelink.

Support before and after a tenancy

A total of 121 clients received pre-tenancy support, which informs clients about the market, property search methods and housing benefit, and gives them the skills to manage their rent and tenancy. We also held twice-weekly drop-ins at our office and maintained a good level of ongoing support and encouragement to enable clients to stay motivated. Every single survey respondent found the pre-tenancy workshops useful. Feedback included: "We felt comfortable. It sounds cheesy but we got to know each other a bit throughout." "It's such a relief to know there are others like me; I blame myself less for being homeless. It's encouraging too; hearing other people's experiences, getting some tips."

Our post-tenancy support remains vital, particularly for young people who have never held a tenancy before, enabling them to achieve positive outcomes in education, employment and financial management. It provided a safety net for people like Jamal, a client with a long unstable housing history who felt unsettled in the first few days in his new room and repeatedly stated an intention to abandon his tenancy. We kept in regular contact and supported him to tackle his unease. "I really appreciate this. Just being able to sit down for a chat has made such a difference."

We since referred Jamal to a work placement scheme for ex-homeless people which he reported was "brilliant. It has given me the sense that I can do something different with my life." Another client had never held his own tenancy. Homelink helped him to learn how to manage utilities and forms, including a housing benefit application: "It's a pain, but not as difficult as I thought it would be. I can actually do this." On the day he moved into his room, he asked to use the Homelink client phone: "I want to chase up that apprenticeship I applied for. It is so much easier now I am housed."

A large, stylized number '27.4%' in a decorative, gothic-style font with blue and green highlights.

Homelessness rose by 27.4% across London in 2011.

Source: National Statistics on Statutory Homelessness, DCLG, 2012

A large, stylized number '88,000' in a decorative, gothic-style font with blue and green highlights.

67% of claimants on the shared room rate already had a shortfall on average of £29 per week when it was limited to the under 25s. Extending the rate to the under 35s will mean an extra 88,000 people will be affected.

Source: Department for Work and Pensions, 2010

Landlords

74% of landlords said they would not take a tenant on housing benefit even if the person had a guarantor.

Source: sparerroom.co.uk, 2012

Plans for 2012/13

Despite the challenges presented by the market and policy context, in the coming year we plan to work harder in order to:

- Support 25 people gain tenancies in shared accommodation in the private rented sector.
- Undertake 40 one-to-one assessments with people in housing need and provide them with pre-tenancy training.
- Support 12 individuals to find the most suitable housing option for their needs, if Homelink proves to be an inappropriate option.
- Recruit householders who will provide lodgings for people on a low income.
- Share the lessons learnt from the lodgings approach with homeless services and develop a sustainable programme for QSA in the longer term.

Making a difference: Leon

Leon is originally from Tottenham. In 2006 to 2007 he spent several months sleeping rough in the area, mainly around Haringey Green Lanes railway station. "It was so cold that winter, I'd buy a ticket and ride the trains in the day, or buses at night."

Leon moved to Bow last year to be closer to the job he had started as a support work assistant for a supported housing association. He was on a temporary contract, which was initially renewed for a further three months, before being terminated and leaving him unemployed. It was soon after this that Leon became homeless. His landlady served notice on all the tenants in his building and immediately started major rebuilding work. "The construction work went on seven days a week and it became impossible to live there. It felt like harassment."

She would ask Leon every day when he was moving. He finally decided to move out despite having nowhere to go. Without the money for a deposit and with high rents proving unaffordable, he found it difficult to find somewhere new to live. Temporarily, he began staying with 'a friend of a friend'. Without a place to call his own, he joined east London's hidden homeless. He kept off the streets and away from the hostels, and so wasn't recorded amongst the official statistics of rough sleepers in the capital.

Life wasn't easy for Leon during that period.

"Becoming homeless wasn't my fault, but it makes you feel very unsure and vulnerable. It's demeaning and there is lots of pressure... I was also afraid what employers would think when I couldn't even put an address on application forms."

The good news is, with Homelink's help, this year he found a new home in Stoke Newington in Hackney. He moved in on Monday 10th October 2011, the date that commemorates World Homeless Day itself. Homelink gave him a pack of bedding and other household essentials to get him started in his new home. As he moved in, Leon told us, "It's nice to be in a place to myself. I don't need to worry about anyone else."

Leon was prepared to go for a room in shared accommodation rather than a whole flat, because he wants to find employment and is realistic about the high cost of renting and the amount he is likely to be able to earn. He has been volunteering for a London community charity, but he is keen to work again as soon as possible, preferably in the supported housing, homelessness or substance misuse field.



"It's nice to be in a place to myself. I don't need to worry about anyone else."

Our impact in 2011/12



Homestore enabled...

Knees Up helped...

Made of Money supported...



Knees Up

Building happier, healthier, more sociable estates – starting with a street party

Migration has characterised the east end ever since the late medieval period, and in the 20th century it became home to Jewish, West Indian, Turkish, Bangladeshi, Somali, Vietnamese, Chinese and Eastern European communities. Diversity is one of the area's great strengths, but it can also be a source of tension – particularly at a time of economic recession. Recent research found that one in seven Britons believe the UK experiences too much immigration and just 20 per cent of white people think government should do more for equality for ethnic minorities.

Knees Up works on some of the most deprived estates in Tower Hamlets, a borough home to stark inequality; despite having the highest rate of UK child and pensioner poverty, the average annual wage of those working here is £64,000, a figure heavily skewed by the City's sky-high salaries. In 2011/12 we focused on Digby estate, an area where three in four tenants are in receipt of housing benefit, and 42 per cent are in rent arrears. Knees Up's outreach found that although one in two households had lived on the estate for over ten years, the vast majority knew fewer than ten people, and 30 per cent had never heard of the estate's community centre.

Our approach is unconventional, but it works. We knock on people's doors, build up their trust and ask – what is good about where you live? How could we work together to make it better? Would you like to get involved in activities with your neighbours? Street parties ignite the latent potential for people power, and little by little residents come together to build positive relationships, confidence and community action. Along the way we provide one-to-one support to households in the most need, enabling them to improve their wellbeing and play a greater part in their community.

We recruited local volunteers to boost our capacity in 2011/12. Thank you to the six team members who collectively contributed 51 days, over 300 hours, to the project.

Meeting the need

In 2011/12 we worked with 622 households on Digby estate, benefiting 85 per cent (534 households) through parties and other activities. In all, 93 people (15 per cent of the estate) engaged with the project more closely by receiving individual support or attending party planning meetings, workshops or community action with their neighbours.

A stylized green number '64%' with a decorative, calligraphic font. The numbers are thick and have a slight shadow, giving them a 3D appearance. The percentage sign is also stylized with a circular dot.

In Mile End & Globe Town, home to Digby estate, 64% of secondary school pupils qualify for free school meals, compared to the 14% national average.

Source: ONS data

A stylized green number '33%' with a decorative, calligraphic font. The numbers are thick and have a slight shadow, giving them a 3D appearance. The percentage sign is also stylized with a circular dot.

33% of Tower Hamlets households live on less than £20,000 a year.

Source: Tower Hamlets Community Plan, 2011

One-to-one support

Last year we had encountered high needs on the doorstep, which were preventing residents from getting involved with the Knees Up programme, so in 2011/12 we introduced a new one-to-one support system. Every resident was offered support and guidance around barriers such as overcrowding, isolation, poor health, benefit entitlement and debt – 45 households took this up, receiving 113 hours of support in total. Specific cases included:

- We advocated for Therese, who had been suffering from strokes, to have her care reassessed which led to necessary adaptations being made to her home.
- Roy, a disabled pensioner, had no idea he was entitled to attendance allowance – we helped him apply and he was awarded £50 a week.
- We helped Ade to apply for a welfare grant to use at Homestore, so his two young boys could each have their own beds.

Parties and workshops

Party planning meetings led to five street parties held on weekends in July, August and September, which were attended by 496 residents. They sparked new relationships, positivity and community spirit, with 82 per cent of attendees reporting they had met someone new, and 93 per cent agreeing the day had benefited the estate. From autumn onwards we delivered workshops related to financial and digital literacy and community organising.

31 residents came together weekly to learn key skills, gain confidence and form connections within their community.

Fathima said: "It helped bring everyone in the community together."

Therese said: "I learned how to turn the computer on and just go for it. I won't have to call my grandson so much for help!"

Uswa said: "I have more confidence and I feel happy. I wish you can continue Knees Up forever!"

Ian said: "I learned that group communication can be more effective than solo efforts."

Community action

These workshops were followed by community action meetings, which gave residents the confidence, communication skills and know-how to work with key local stakeholders for productive change. Towards the end of the cycle a core group of residents drew up a three-point plan for the estate to address in partnership with their registered social landlord, which covered improving signage and lighting and tackling youth antisocial behaviour. In the months following Knees Up's withdrawal from the area, progress has already been made – the housing association has committed to putting up new signs this year, and is introducing a system to ensure people cannot congregate in a play area after dark.

A stylized green text '3 in 4' with a decorative, calligraphic font. The numbers are thick and have a slight shadow, giving them a 3D appearance. The text is set against a dark background.

Three in four residents of the estate receive housing benefits, and 42% are in rent arrears.

Source: Tower Hamlets Homes, Roman Road neighbourhood at a glance data, 2011

Plans for 2012/13

In 2012/13 we will work on Mansford estate in Bethnal Green, which is larger than Digby estate and presents fresh challenges. We plan to:

- Support residents to hold five street parties and community events.
- Ensure at least 75 per cent of households are aware of Knees Up and 40 per cent are engaged in some way beyond attending a party (i.e. by taking part in party planning, workshops and community action or receiving support).
- Work with a local faith community to establish weekly community lunch sessions, enhancing our ability to attract residents and sustain their engagement.
- Ensure 10 per cent of households engage more closely with Knees Up by taking part in two or more interventions.
- Establish a Neighbourhood Agreement, whereby residents agree priorities for positive changes to services in their area, in partnership with their landlord, local churches, schools, police and other key stakeholders.

Knees Up

Making a difference: Connie & Albert and Mina

Connie is a pensioner originally from Malta who had lived on the estate for 27 years. Her husband Albert suffers with severe Alzheimers, which causes him to become violent at times, especially during the night. We supported her to access a grant to buy a second bed from Homestore, which she can sleep on separately at times when she feels at risk from the night time episodes. After the bed arrived, Connie remarked that it was "the first night in years that Albert has slept through the night".

She got thoroughly involved with every aspect of the Knees Up programme, coming to events and trying her hand at workshops related to community action. At a street party she told us with a smile, "I've lived here 27 years and we've never had a party."

She reflected on her experience of Knees Up as a whole at our final celebratory event in March 2012: "You are like a breath of fresh air. You gave me something to do, reason to come out of my house."

Mina, a mum of four in her 40s, was first referred to us by a concerned neighbour. She was living in a two bedroom flat in a block without a lift, along with her husband, who has severe mental health needs, and their children, one of whom suffers from a chronic skin condition. At the first street party one of her sons helped with the music, allowing us to begin building a relationship with the family. Through one-to-one support we ensured Mina was claiming the right disability benefits and encouraged her to bid for a larger property based on her family's medical needs.

Mina had not been involved in any learning since leaving teacher training in Bangladesh at the age of 20, so in autumn we encouraged her to take the step of attending Knees Up's financial literacy workshops. She found great benefit in the credit and debt session, telling us, "I feel my heart is less stressed. It gave me so many ideas about how I can solve my financial situation and save money in my family."

Her newfound confidence shone through when she brought lots of friends to a celebration evening. The family was finally re-housed in a four bed property, which gave Mina the strength and positivity to begin to look after herself, as well as everyone else. In March we helped her to access free sessions from a life coach, with interpreting support from Dinar, Knees Up's development worker. This process helped her to find simple ways to cope better by introducing more space and time for herself in the day, and to start taking steps towards employment.

She had a strong desire to get back into teaching in the UK and, having identified her poor English language as a major preventative factor, took action by signing up to a year-long ESOL and IT class at a nearby community centre. While Mina's life situation is still extremely challenging, this step feels like the beginning of a major turning point, enabling her to find greater financial freedom for herself and her family.



Connie & Albert



Mina

Down to Earth

Taking on the debt and distress caused by funeral costs

Losing a loved one is devastating, but it will come to each and every one of us: it is the stuff of life. Despite this, we rarely plan ahead, which leaves family members saddled with the pain and expense of arranging funerals after we die. Death is getting dearer too – funeral costs are rising out of all proportion with inflation, and state support is far from enough to meet the need.

In 2012, one in six people were short of the funds they needed to pay for a funeral – the average shortfall was £1,246. This is a huge hurdle for people on the very lowest incomes, which can lead to problematic borrowing and a lasting financial burden. The Social Fund's funeral payment scheme is designed to contribute to costs, rather than cover them, and it faces far greater demand than it is able to meet. The standard amount awarded provides just a third of the £3,803 average cost of a London funeral, and only 60 per cent of applicants are successful. Some people simply can't pay at all: since the recession began there has been a 14 per cent rise in London public health funerals, provided by councils when families are too destitute to foot the bill.

That's where Down to Earth comes in – providing effective, straightforward and compassionate advice and support to prevent undue financial difficulty and anxiety. Our mentors are matched with families, and work with them to apply for financial aid and plan a funeral that honours the life of the person who has died, without leaving a legacy of debt. Alongside that we work in strategic partnerships to tackle the personal, public and private sector factors which underpin the entrenched nature of funeral poverty.

Meeting the need

2011/12 was Down to Earth's first full year of operation, and the project has fast established itself as a sensitive, appropriate and skilled intervention, which genuinely saves people money and reduces anxiety.



The number of people facing funeral debt is set to increase as the death rate is projected to rise by 17% each year for the next 15 years.

Source: National Audit Office, 2008



Nationwide, funeral poverty stands at a record £118 million, up nearly 40% in just two years.

Source: Woodthorpe, K. 'Affording a funeral' Social Fund Funeral Payments, Bath University 2012

Support service

We have built up a team of 25 volunteer funeral mentors, trained to support people in financial need leading up to and shortly after bereavement. We now have 177 referral agencies and we provided over 420 hours of information, advice, guidance and one-to-one support to 124 families over the course of the year.

The typical funeral bill paid by Down to Earth clients was under £2,200 – just 60 per cent of the London average. People we've mentored have made an average financial saving of £1,158, and have secured over £20,000 in welfare grants. This is evidence of huge debt reduction, which can be directly linked to 69 per cent reporting less stress and improved mental wellbeing. Giving bereaved people in financial hardship the space to simply sit and talk about their loss brings dignity and solace and helps to build trust and rapport. One service user said that Down to Earth had provided the "one kind calm voice amongst everything else that was out of control".

Pre-funeral planning

We don't just work with people in crisis. We also aim to equip people with greater understanding and knowledge in order to plan for their own future, and reduce their anxiety in the meantime. Over the year we delivered eight events, workshops and focus groups on advance financial planning for death, reaching 122 people. Participants have felt relief at being given permission to open up about the topic – an older attendee described the event as "quite joyous!"

Working for fairer funerals

We are also working to overcome the key barriers facing low income consumers in purchasing an affordable funeral and accessing financial support. In July 2011 Down to Earth and St Joseph's Hospice launched the East London Strategic Alliance for a good death and the very best bereavement care. Its growing membership of 60 agencies have attended three major seminars and formed smaller sub groups, leading to actions such as:

- Negotiating a cost-effective funeral package for under £1,800 with regional funeral directors;
- Placing pressure on government to improve the experience of funeral payment applicants.

Sleepwalking

"We are likely to see ever-increasing pressure on an already stretched system... something needs to be done, and quickly, to prevent the most vulnerable sleepwalking into a financial nightmare of debt and distress."

Source: Woodthorpe, K. 'Affording a funeral' Social Fund Funeral Payments, Bath University 2012

Plans for 2012/13

In the coming year Down to Earth plans to build on its achievement of reaching 124 households in 2011/12, extending its reach and raising awareness through media coverage, publicity and new referral partnerships. We plan to:

- Reach 200 people in immediate need through our responsive support service.
- Support a further 100 people to plan ahead through the pre-funeral planning programme.
- Recruit and train 50 new volunteer mentors and capacity build our current mentor team.
- Work with east London funeral directors to negotiate a cost-effective funeral that will become a permanent option for east end households on a low income.
- Lobby to improve access for people requiring a Social Fund funeral payment.
- Research and develop pre-funeral planning resources to enable Down to Earth and other advice providers to prevent funeral poverty.

Down to Earth

Making a difference: Nora

"Thinking back, I didn't realise just how long a period I'd been a carer. My mum first had cancer, leading to the removal of a kidney back in 2000. Thankfully, until she was really poorly her other kidney always functioned well. She always drank well, my mum, we both like sparkling water, which I think helped!

Then about 10 years ago, two years after the cancer, she had a massive embolism blocking her lungs. After that she tried to talk to me about her funeral. I said 'mum, you're fine, I don't want to talk about it.' Her cancer came back in August 2011, and it was spreading. She'd been having falls and several other health problems too. The doctor said there was nothing they could do and that it was likely to go to her brain. It was so hard watching someone deteriorate like that. She decided that she didn't want to go into the hospice, so I stayed for the last four weeks of her life. There wasn't any question of me not moving in, it was just, 'right, ok, she needs me here all the time'. Because I wasn't working I was able to do that. I'd not been able to work for a while with health problems, and as for money, I had nothing, well, limited resources, put it that way.

When she died, initially I was devastated. I knew it was going to happen of course, but suddenly I didn't have my mum anymore. Then after a few days it suddenly hit me – I was free. I felt an overwhelming feeling of relief, freedom, but of course I felt guilt too. It feels terrible saying it, but I was liberated in a way. I thought, well now I've got to sort things out, it's down to me. I didn't want to rely on my kids – I didn't want to expect too much of them. I just didn't know how to start. I was just overwhelmed by the paperwork that one person's death makes.

I'd been told about QSA and the Down to Earth project by a friend of my mum's who thought they might be able to help me. I met with Lawrence. He was friendly, helpful, very helpful, and said if I wanted to chat I could phone at any time. He gave me all the information I needed to get help with the funeral and so on. He helped me to phone several funeral directors to get quotes. My friend lent me the deposit for the funeral because everything was going to take a long time to sort out. It turned out mum had a small ISA and life insurance, which was just about enough to cover the £3,500 funeral bill and pay back the loan.

Coming to Down to Earth just put things in perspective, what needs to happen, what to do – first this, now this, now this. I think it made a big difference knowing that someone was there, someone was compassionate, on your side. It's the not feeling alone and scared.

Everyone I've met from QSA has been very sensitive and understanding. All of you, you deal with people at their lowest ebb, it's just amazing. I think you really know how to be with them, there in the moment. I would recommend QSA in a heartbeat to someone worried about funeral costs. If you go to some huge organisation, they're not going to give you that warm feeling, that contact, that connection. And that's what you need at that time, definitely."

"I think it made a big difference knowing that someone was compassionate, on your side. It's the not feeling alone and scared."



Made of Money

Making families' money stretch that little bit further

Arguments about money seem inevitable, pulling families apart as they fight to make ends meet; avoiding them is one of the real benefits of improved financial literacy. That's why we focus on giving parents the confidence to talk about money, so they can manage their finances and improve communication, making it easier to raise a family on a low income.

Money fundamentally affects families' standard of living and children's life chances, their ability to access childcare and educational attainment. More than 74,000 children in Hackney, Islington and Tower Hamlets live in households on a low income, still among the very top child poverty rates of anywhere in the country: more children in London are poor, and their experience of poverty is harsher.

The current economic crisis challenges us all and more financial strain is to come, with families set to face a disproportionate burden. As wages and hours have been cut, the number of adults in work, but also in poverty has risen. For those moving between poorly paid unreliable work and unemployment, the stakes are particularly high. Rising utility bills, domestic outgoings and housing costs make it ever harder to avoid rent arrears and debt. Add to this the pressures of a consumerist society, the guilt of not being able to provide toys, trips or named brands, and it's not hard to see why some parents turn to high-cost credit to meet their children's needs and hold everything together.

The evidence, and our experience, shows that people living on a low income manage their finances pretty well; they have to because money is so tight. In these harder times, parents have to think carefully about how to adapt, and Made of Money guides them to do this.

A large, stylized number '22%' in a green, textured font with a slight shadow effect.

More than one in five (22%) working-age housing benefit claimants are in work, and the numbers have nearly doubled in the last three years.

Source: JRF, 2012

Meeting the need

We don't lend people money; we help them to manage and maximise what they already have. Focusing on parental education and the needs of the whole family, in 2011/12, we supported 278 families including 496 children, to improve their financial literacy, wellbeing and communication skills – helping each family save on average £50 per month.

We ran 24 parents' courses, each over six weeks, helping parents understand budgeting, credit, debt and savings, as well as giving them the skills and confidence to reduce the financial and emotional strain on their family. We also ran ten family courses, each over three weeks, including five fathers' courses, which used creative activities to explore how money affects their daily lives. Our whole-family learning approach enables parents and children to talk more openly about money and the issues it raises at home, helping them to learn together and adopt more responsible financial behaviours. This means that they are better able to react to emerging financial problems before they become unmanageable. Making informed spending decisions avoids unnecessary financial risk, which could help the average family on a low income cut the cost of debt by around 40 per cent. Outcomes from all of our courses this year include:

- 78 per cent of parents said their children now better understand the financial decisions that they make as a family;
- 72 per cent of participants said they were more in control of their finances;
- 89 per cent of participants said they now talk more as a family about money.

A large, stylized number '£455' in a green, textured font with a slight shadow effect.

A couple with two children aged 3 and 7 need to spend £455 a week, excluding rent and childcare, to reach a minimum standard of living. If they both work they each need to earn £18,400 a year.

Source: Minimum Income Standards, JRF, 2012

Partnership work

In London we work with schools and children's centres to deliver the course in Hackney, Islington and Tower Hamlets. We also share our knowledge and approach with other organisations across the UK, teaching them to deliver our course as well as raising their financial awareness so they can provide a better service. This year we trained and supported 82 new facilitators from 51 organisations in disadvantaged parts of the UK. As the number of people trained increases, we are developing more effective ways to monitor the impact. A survey showed 535 low income households were supported by Made of Money facilitators nationwide in 2011/12.

In Islington this year we developed a borough-wide approach to the problems of debt and low income. Moneytalk Islington combined three aspects of our work: direct delivery of the award winning Made of Money course; our partnership programme improving the capability of front-line staff to support their clients' financial needs; and a series of strategic conversations with the council, Islington Debt Coalition and other partners to promote financial inclusion.

Reaching more people across the UK we are learning how to adapt our courses to suit different groups in different places:

- Families fleeing domestic violence (in Islington and Litchfield): Running this course with refuges has given women fleeing domestic violence the skills and confidence to negotiate their share of joint finances, and gain the control and self sufficiency to live independently.

Children in London are more likely to lack everyday items than poor children in the rest of the UK, with six out of nine everyday items unaffordable to at least 20% of children.

Source: DWP Family Resources Survey and Households Below Average Income, 2006/7 – 2008/9

– Young people (in Dorchester and Lewisham): A short version of the course run over three weeks has been delivered to young people aged 10-18 years old, giving participants a good awareness of the way money can have a positive or negative impact on their lives.

– In secondary schools/sixth form colleges (in Dumbarton): Run in a local high school and a sixth form college, the programme has helped students pay off their debts and save money for everyday essentials, preparing them to live independently from their families.

– Social housing tenants (in Portsmouth and Wigan): Several housing associations have run the course, some offering it as a precondition for tenancy. It has helped prepare residents to cope with the impending changes to benefits that will require them to manage on a reduced income, with extra sessions on fuel poverty and healthy eating.

– Disabled people (in Stoke): The course has been adapted for people with learning disabilities. As many participants find communication difficult more images and group work were included.

– Made of Money bite-size (in Northern Ireland): The Northern Ireland Consumer Council has adapted the programme to create 15 minute sessions that are included in pre-existing courses, such as computer training classes and parents' coffee mornings.

Plans for 2012/13

Although national child poverty figures have fallen, our experience tells us that most families on a low income in east London have not benefited. Next year we plan to reach more families in financial need, as well as benefiting others through our national network.

We plan to:

- Educate 230 families in east London through 26 parents' and 9 families' courses.
- Train 68 facilitators from 34 partner organisations across the UK.
- Improve monitoring and evaluation mechanisms in east London and across our UK network.

Made of Money

Making a difference: Dawn

"I don't do bingo. I don't do the lottery. Now and again I might do a couple of scratch cards but that's about it. The money I've won goes on milk, or if I need a bit extra on gas it'll go on that. Living in a small flat, there is nowhere for the kids to play. It's important for them to get away, have a break, and get a chance to run around. Until this year I've always stayed in Britain because I've never had a passport. I've never been abroad but this year we're going to Spain. It's going to be an adventure – we've never even been on an aeroplane before.

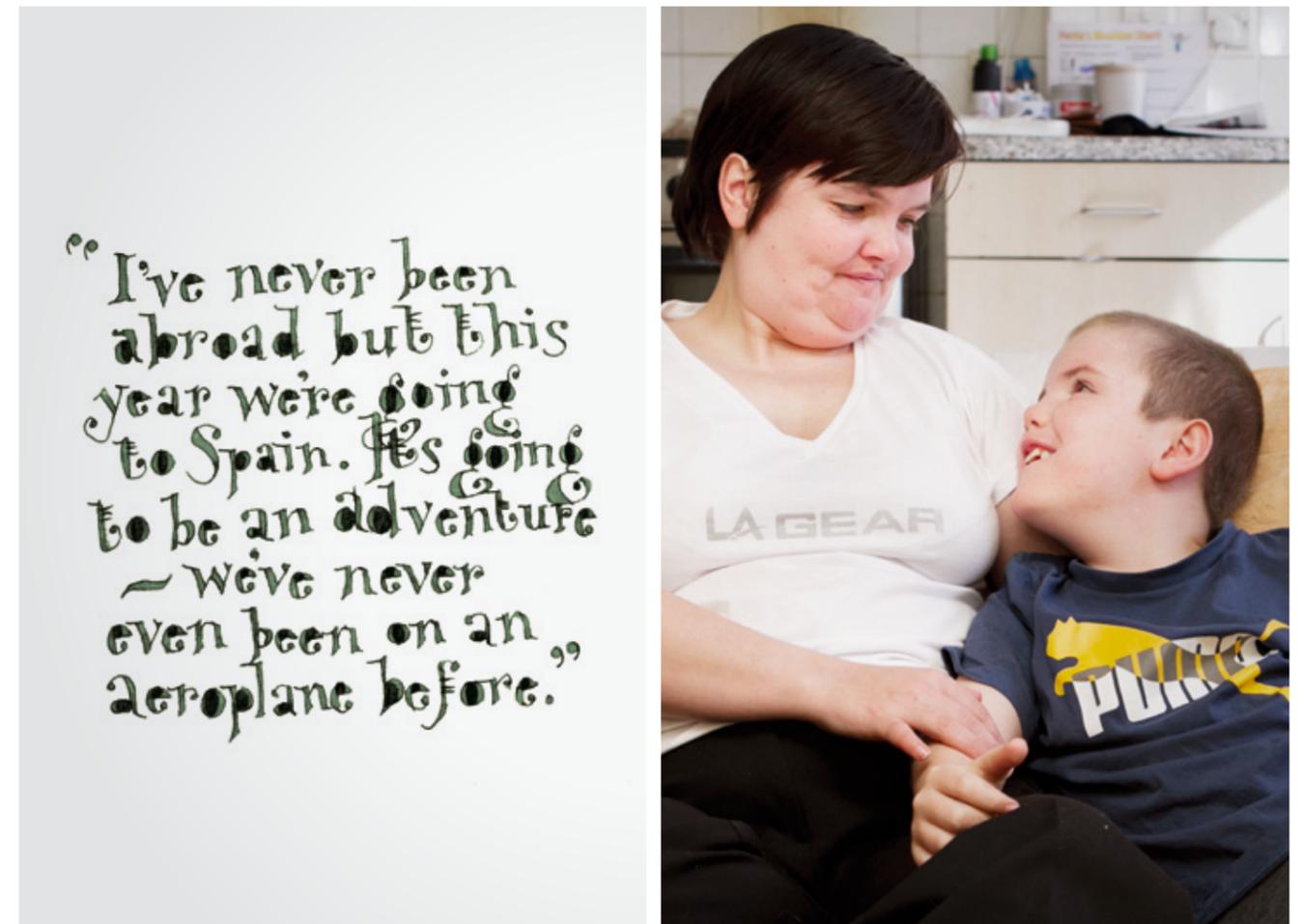
I live with my son and daughter in a second floor housing association flat. We are classified as overcrowded and waiting to move somewhere else, but it's taking a long time. Obviously with Perrie having special needs I haven't been able to work. When he was born he was very sickly, in and out of hospital. So with that, and everything, we got involved with social services and I got very depressed. Perrie and Emilie were taken into foster care for two years. I felt guilty for them being in care so anything and everything they wanted I gave them, even if it meant missing the rent or only putting a fiver on the electric. If I had a bit of extra money then I'd give it to them. I overcompensated.

There was no planning ahead. There was no rainy day money. There have been times in the past when I've needed to take Perrie to hospital and not had enough money for a taxi or anything. I've not had any credit on my phone. Then I've had to phone 999 for an ambulance when I didn't really need it but it was the only way of getting Perrie to a hospital. So when I heard about Made of Money I thought it could really help.

It got me thinking. I've realised that they can't have anything they want. I decided that I didn't want to just give them pocket money. I want them to start understanding. I was never taught about budgeting or housework and I don't want that for Emilie. She needs to start understanding money and things like that. Now we sit down and we talk. Emilie and Perrie earn 50p for tidying their rooms, feeding the pets, unloading the washing machine. So as well as earning money they are learning about daily household tasks. They are not so demanding and I don't feel like I've got 'Barclays' across my head anymore.

I'd never had a bank account before because I'd never had a passport. Kristina, (from Made of Money), asked us to think about something we'd really like to do. I've always wanted to go abroad. We opened my credit union account and I've been putting money in each week especially for going to Spain. Now we've got the passports all sorted, I've paid for them. I've paid half the money for the holiday. And I'm saving spending money on top of that. We're going at the end of August.

The other parents can see the difference in me. Life before Made of Money was hectic, very hectic, kind of all over the place. Now it's a lot more controlled. We've got a budget and we know where we're at. We know what money we've got available each week. We've got what we need. If we do get an emergency I know that we've got money there. It's a peace of mind."



Finances in 2011/12

Income

Our work can only be achieved because of the generosity of the people who invest in what we do. We receive money from five key strands: public funding, from statutory authorities who see our work as contributing to building a just and fair society; charitable trusts with the foresight and vision to reward the innovative nature of our work; corporate donations from businesses who recognise the value of our work to the local community; earned income where the fruits of our own work can produce a sustainable form of income and individual donations from Quakers and others, which are central to everything we do, allowing us to plough our resources, time and energy into the needs of our community. Given the challenges facing many of the people who invest financially in our work, we remain thankful for the tenacity of those who continue to support us to equip, enable and empower individuals in east London.

Expenditure

We value every penny given to us to help us fulfil our vision of a just world where people put people first. We are committed to managing our resources carefully and efficiently, committing as much funding as possible to changing lives. Just six per cent of our expenditure this year went on generating funds; the remaining 94 per cent kept us tackling poverty on the front line. In our expenditure we live out our values, we put people at the centre of what we do, we pursue excellence as we do it, and we do this in a cost-effective way by meeting local needs at a local level.

Reserves policy

Our reserves are held to ensure a continuity of service to the people we work with. They are set at a level which takes account of variations in cash flow, and maintains our ability to pilot new charitable activities independent of external funding, in accordance with QSA's ethos. QSA trustees wish to sustain the current level of reserves, at around the six month level of expenditure, given the prevailing context of relative uncertainty about future funding, and to ensure the longer-term viability of the organisation.

Independent Auditor's Statement to the Trustees of Quaker Social Action

We have examined the summary financial statement for the year ended 31st March 2012, set out on pages 30 and 31.

Respective Responsibilities of the Trustees and Auditors

The trustees are responsible for preparing the summarised financial statement in accordance with applicable United Kingdom law. Our responsibility is to report to you our opinion on the consistency of the summary financial statement with the full annual financial statements and the Trustees' Annual Report, and its compliance with the relevant requirements of section 427 of the Companies Act 2006 and the regulations made thereunder.

We conducted our work in accordance with Bulletin 2008/3 issued by the Auditing Practices Board. Our report on the company's full annual financial statements describes the basis of our opinion on those financial statements and on the Trustees' Annual Report.

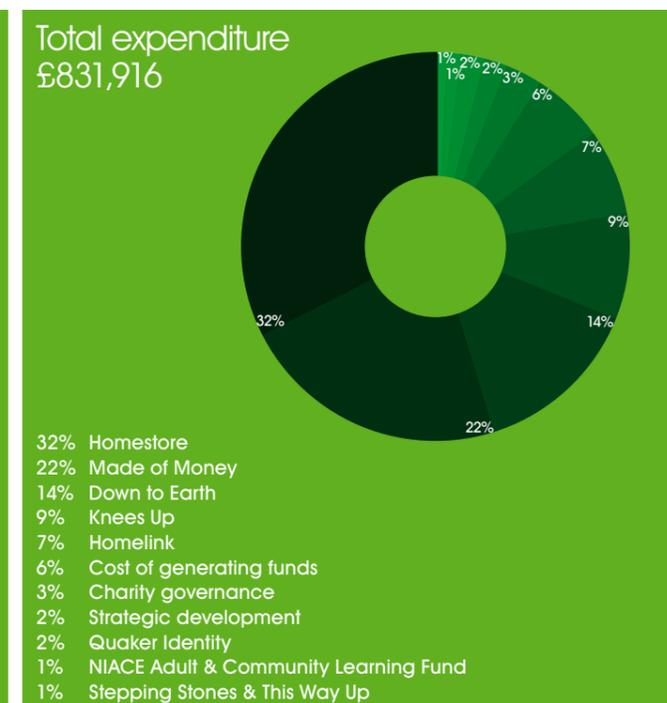
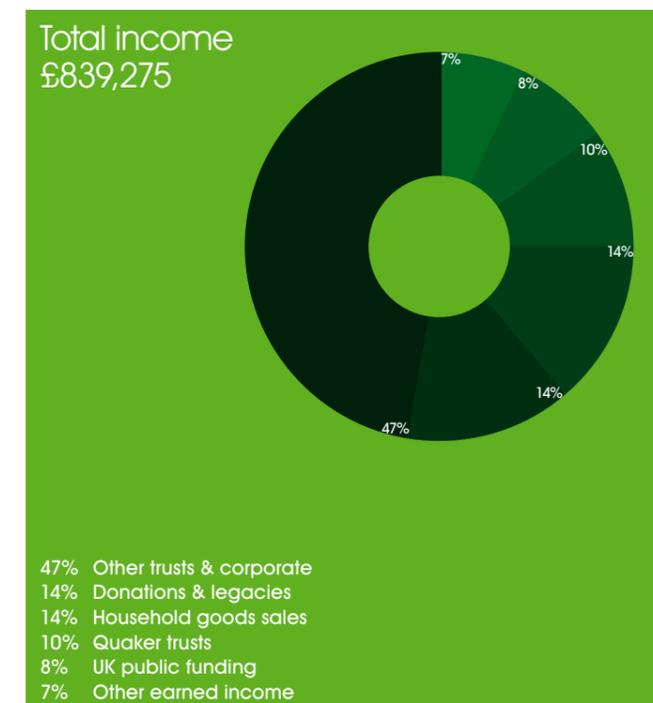
Opinion

In our opinion, the summary financial statement is consistent with the full annual financial statements and the Trustees' Annual Report of Quaker Social Action for the year ended 31st March 2012 and complies with the applicable requirements of section 427 of the Companies Act 2006 and the regulations made thereunder.

Accounts in 2011/12

Balance Sheet at 31 March 2012

Incoming resources	£	Fixed assets	£
Donations & legacies	120,707	Freehold property & investments	144,828
Quaker trusts	83,772	Vehicles & office equipment	17,682
Other trusts & corporate	394,561	Total fixed assets	162,510
Household goods sales	115,464	Current assets	£
Other earned income	55,998	Debtors & stocks	53,217
UK public funding	68,773	Managed deposit account	299,619
Total income	839,275	Cash at bank & in hand	295,712
		Total current assets	648,548
Expenditure	£	Current liabilities	£
Homelink	60,572	Creditors due within one year	140,132
Homestore	267,721	Net current assets	508,416
Made of Money	147,275	Total assets less current liabilities	670,926
Knees Up	76,616	Net assets	670,926
Down to Earth	113,212	Represented by:	
Moneytalk Islington	39,501	Restricted funds	£
Stepping Stones	4,738	Samuel Gurney building depreciation fund	46,885
NIACE Adult & Community Learning Fund	11,752	Homelink revolving fund	38,362
This Way Up	577	Motor Vehicle depreciation fund	14,354
Quaker Identity	11,368	Street Cred loan fund	11,096
Community Patrons	1,427	Knees Up operating fund	21,822
		Total restricted funds	132,519
Direct charitable expenditure	734,759	Designated funds	£
Strategic development	20,769	Programmes initiatives fund	115,000
Charity governance	24,639	Premises development fund	85,000
		Contingency reserves	316,945
Total charitable expenditure	780,167	Total designated funds	516,945
Net charitable income	59,108	Unrestricted funds	£
Less cost of generating funds	51,749	Charity general fund	21,462
Total operating surplus	7,359		
Plus other recognised losses	(258)		
Opening fund balance	663,825	Closing fund balance	670,926
		Total funds	670,926



Joycelin Dawes

Joycelin Dawes, Chair of trustees
Signed on behalf of the trustees of QSA.

K C Fisher

Myrus Smith Chartered Accountants & Statutory Auditors,
Norman House, 8 Burnell Road, Sutton, Surrey SM1 4BW.

Donations

145 years on, we continue to exist thanks to your support. Your grants, gifts, standing orders and fundraising efforts allow us to continue to support disadvantaged individuals, families and communities through these difficult economic times, both here in east London and beyond.

Please send cheques to Quaker Social Action, 17 Old Ford Road, Bethnal Green, London E2 9PJ. Don't forget to tell us whether you are a UK taxpayer, so we can claim gift aid.

Give online at www.quakersocialaction.com/donate, or text QSAX00 plus your amount to 70070, e.g. 'QSAX00 £10'.

Legacies and investments

If you are planning for the future, and would like to make our mission and values a part of your legacy, please get in touch.

You can also use your savings to support QSA by investing in a secure, ethical charitable bond with Allia. Get in touch or visit www.allia.org.uk/quaker-social-action for more details.

Time and resources

Money is essential, but we can't make best use of it without our committed volunteers. Please contact us if you'd like to get involved by giving your time. Gifts of IT equipment and event space are also a very welcome way of reducing our costs and increasing the amount we can devote to supporting people. If you live in east London, don't forget Homestore always needs your second hand furniture.

Contacts and partnerships

We welcome hearing from any fundraisers, designers, photographers, trainers and journalists with time and skills to lend us. We're also on the lookout for partners interested in our national Made of Money training programme, or in working with Down to Earth to campaign for fairer funerals.

We hope you've enjoyed reading this report and would love to hear your compliments, criticisms and suggestions.

Contact

Quaker Social Action
www.quakersocialaction.com

17 Old Ford Road,
Bethnal Green,
London E2 9PJ.
Tel: 020 8983 5030
Email: info@qsa.org.uk
Facebook: www.facebook.com/quakersocialaction

Homestore

Unit 2, Maryland Estate,
26 Maryland Road,
London E15 1JW.
020 8519 6264
homestore@qsa.org.uk

All other projects are based at:
17 Old Ford Road,
Bethnal Green,
London E2 9PJ.

Homelink

Tel: 020 8983 5060
Email: homelink@qsa.org.uk

Knees Up

Tel: 020 8983 5050
Email: kneesup@qsa.org.uk

Down to Earth

Tel: 020 8983 5055
Email: downtoearth@qsa.org.uk

Made of Money

Tel: 020 8983 5043
Email: madeofmoney@qsa.org.uk

This Way Up

Tel: 020 8983 5036
Email: timsegaller@qsa.org.uk