

11 Community Assets

11.1 Key Facts

- Barnet has a strong foundation for an asset-based approach with 88% of residents satisfied with their local area and high levels of local capacity.
- 90% of residents agree that they help their neighbours out when needed and 28% volunteer regularly (weekly or monthly).
- Charities Commission and Council data suggests that there were 1235 registered charities operating in Barnet as of February 2015; 51.7% from in or near Barnet and 48.3% from outside the Borough.
- Education and training is the most commonly identified benefit provided (due in part to the number of schools which are registered charities), followed by religious activities, general charitable purposes, and the prevention and relief of poverty.
- The highest numbers of local charities are based in Golders Green (74 organisations), Edgware (48 organisations) and Garden Suburb (46 organisations), likely to reflect high levels of charitable activity among and serving the local Jewish community.
- The resources the Council makes available to local voluntary organisations include grant funding and use of physical assets from the Council's property portfolio – as well as the funds spent with voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations when commissioning local services.
- 337 charities identify older people as their beneficiaries; 647 identify children and young people; 353 benefit people with disabilities.
- In terms of both health and disability-related charitable activities, less than 20% of charities (225) identify their charitable purpose as the advancement of health.

11.2 Strategic Issues

- Key areas of activity in relation to the voluntary and community sector over the next five years include:
 - In adult social care and health, **increased community care to reduce the need for services by meeting people's daily needs**, as well as providing activities which reduce isolation and have other preventative benefits.
 - In children's services, as well as preventative activity, **increased childcare in community settings**; more diverse community provision particularly around mental health, and increased community involvement in the governance of services such as children's centres or libraries.
 - **Working with voluntary and community (VCS) groups to target areas with higher levels of social isolation**, to encourage greater social contact and develop new volunteering opportunities, particularly in the Borough's parks and green spaces.
 - In housing, growth and regeneration, **supporting people affected by welfare reforms and/or on-going poverty**.
 - In environmental services, **getting more people proactively engaged in developing and maintaining their local areas**.
- **Local community sports provision is reasonably well matched to need. There is however the potential to develop this further in areas where childhood obesity rates are high (Colindale, Burnt Oak and Underhill).**

- **Local VCS provision for children is relatively low in the areas where the population of children and young people is forecast to be amongst the highest in the future** (Colindale).
- VCS activity relating to economic development and unemployment is well developed in Colindale and Burnt Oak, the wards with the highest unemployment rates in Barnet. **There is however weaker VCS provision in East Finchley and Underhill, wards which also have significant levels of deprivation.**
- There is a particular gap around **place-based or environmental VCS groups** and/or the relationships the Council maintains with them. The Council needs to consider how to develop and strengthen this sector, as well as strengthen its own links with other existing relevant organisations such as residents' associations.
- More generally, there are opportunities to:
 - **Support and develop the broader volunteering base through diversifying the offer to volunteers**, promoting opportunities such as timebanking, employer supported volunteering, corporate social responsibility and community action (coordinated through the core volunteer offer).
 - **Rethink physical asset provision, including the lower levels of physical community assets present in the North West and centre of the Borough.**
 - Respond to the fact that a significant proportion of local charitable activity in Barnet is focused within faith communities, and this capacity could be engaged with better to deliver health and wellbeing outcomes.

11.3 Overview

11.3.1 What is a Community Asset?

In a health and wellbeing context, a **community asset** is, broadly speaking, 'any factor or resource which enhances the ability of individuals, communities, and populations to maintain and sustain health and wellbeing' (Morgan, NICE, 2009). Assets could include:

- local residents' skills and knowledge
- voluntary activity by individuals, including friendships and neighbourliness as well as volunteering
- community networks and connections
- local voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations
- Resources from public and private sector organisations (including assets in the more classic sense, such as money, land and buildings).

11.3.2 Evidence for Asset-based Approaches, and the Context in Barnet

Recent thinking on asset based approaches in a health and wellbeing context has tended to focus on **asset-based community development** (ABCD). This is an approach to improving outcomes for communities which build on the broad definition of a community asset set out above. Rather than focusing on a community's needs (or 'deficits'), ABCD 'starts by focusing on the skills, knowledge, resources, connections and potential within a community; and building on what is working and what it is that people care about' (Developing the power of strong inclusive communities, Think Local Act Personal, 2014). The ability to identify assets – and mobilise them, getting local people participating in their communities and the decisions which affect them – is therefore also key.

In Barnet, residents already tend to indicate that they have positive feelings about their local area. In autumn 2014, 88% of residents indicated that they were satisfied with their local area as a place to live; significantly higher than the national average (Residents' Perception Survey, autumn 2014). This is a strong foundation for an asset based approach.

Linked to community assets is the concept of **social capital** - 'the connections that are made between people who live in the same area or are part of the same community, and who are able to do things with and for each other. Strong neighbourhoods, clubs and groups help create a sense of community, enabling people to trust each other, work together and look out for each other' (Think Local Act Personal, 2009). Social networks and social capital are consistently linked with better health outcomes – associated with reduced illness and death rates (Berkman & Kawachi, 2000), for example – and is also linked with improvements to other outcomes, such as decreases in crime (Sampson et al, 1997) and increased educational attainment (Ripfa, 2012). In Barnet, social networks are reasonably strong; 84% of residents feeling that people from different backgrounds get on well together as of spring 2014. This is in line with the national average (Residents' Perception Survey, spring 2014).

The level of **participation in civic life**, such as neighbourly activity, peer to peer support, and volunteering, is also considered a community asset. Participation has qualitative benefits – promoting wellbeing for people of all ages (New Economics Foundation, 2008) – as well as providing quantitative benefits in terms of the extra capacity contributed by individuals who are involved in voluntary activity.

Voluntary and community activity also helps to **manage people's need for public services** by preventing individuals from reaching a point where they need funded support. Such activity can involve help with the activities of daily living (such as shopping or cooking) or of maintaining living environments (such as housework or gardening), this can be carried out by organised groups or by informal social networks including friends or neighbours. Voluntary and community groups often provide social activities which **promote inclusion and reduce isolation**, which can also help prevent people from getting to the point where they need more intensive services.

Residents of Barnet perceive themselves as neighbourly – as of spring 2014, 90% of residents agreed that they help their neighbours out when needed, with 57% strongly agreeing. The proportion of residents who agree that their neighbours help each other out when needed is slightly lower at 80%, with 44% strongly agreeing. (Residents' Perception Survey, spring 2014).

11.4 Barnet's Community Assets

11.4.1 Volunteering in Barnet

28% of Barnet residents report that they give unpaid help to groups, clubs or organisations at least once a week or once a month, as of spring 2014. This is comparable to the most recent national benchmarking data (the Cabinet Office Community Life Survey 2013/14), in which 27% of people reported regular formal volunteering of this kind. Regular volunteering saw a large rise both locally and nationally in 2012/13, generally attributed to the knock-on effect of the London Olympics, and declined slightly in subsequent years. Levels of infrequent volunteering tend to be much higher, with national data suggesting that the proportion of people who volunteer annually exceeds 40%.

The Council commissions a volunteering brokerage service, which matches potential volunteers to volunteering opportunities. As of 2015/16 this was provided by Groundwork London. Some specialist volunteer services run alongside this, including, in 2015/16, Active Volunteering by Disabled People, a project supporting people with disabilities to volunteer.

In Barnet, faith-based communities have a number of specialist volunteering structures such as the Jewish Volunteering Network, which promotes volunteering opportunities to the Jewish community.

Formal volunteer brokerage services are complemented by initiatives such as timebanking, a service which helps individual residents exchange time and skills. In 2015/16 there were two Timebank networks in Barnet, one run by CommUNITY Barnet, covering Burnt Oak, Colindale, Edgware and West Hendon, and the other covering the rest of the Borough, run by Timebank UK. In its first year of operation the Borough-wide Timebank registered 138 members and exchanged 400 hours of activities. Timebank runs on a hub and spoke model with the potential for other organisations to host timebank facilities in the future and plans to roll out an additional three hubs in the next five years.

11.4.2 Council-initiated VCS Activity

As well as its mechanisms for involving residents and service users in decision making, the Council commissions a number of specific community development programmes. In 2015/16 these included a public health programme, known as Ageing Well or Altogether Better, which works with people in a number of localities across the Borough to increase community capacity, reduce isolation and help older people live longer as part of their communities. Each locality has a steering group which devises a range of activities appropriate to that community and its needs. In 2015/16 there were four localities – Burnt Oak, East Finchley, Edgware & Stonegrove and High Barnet & Underhill.

There were also a number of small-scale place-based schemes – six ‘Adopt-a-Place’ schemes (as of November 2014) in which volunteers were working with the Council to maintain a local environmental feature – for example, litter picking in a street, or watering a flowerbed.

11.4.3 The Broader VCS in Barnet

There is also a broad range of voluntary and community organisations operating in Barnet and which have come into being independently of the Council. The largest available dataset is drawn from the Charities Commission register of charities, and suggests that there are 1,235 registered charities operating in Barnet. 638 (51.7%) are based in or near Barnet and 597 (48.3%) come from outside the Borough¹⁶⁴. Local and national research estimates the number of less formal, ‘below the radar’, organisations may be much larger. These are organisations such as grassroots or neighbourhood groups, including residents’ and community associations. In 2015, local research by the Young Foundation found over 300 different ‘below the radar’ groups operating within one square mile of Golders Green tube station (Young Foundation, 2015). National research estimates 3.66 ‘below the radar’ organisations per 1,000 population (NCVO, 2010, cited in CommUNITY Barnet, 2013).

The registered charities that operate in Barnet serve different client groups. Table 11-1 shows the breakdown of client groups. (Each charity can select more than one client group; percentages are

¹⁶⁴ Data in this section has been compiled from the Charities Commission’s register of charities who state that they operate in Barnet, as of February 2015, combined with Charities Commission data on VCS organisations who have contracts with Barnet Council to provide services, either directly to the Council or to residents.

given to show the proportion of the total number of charities in Barnet which serves this client group.)

Table 11-1: Client groups served by charities operating in Barnet

Service Users	Number	Percentage
Children / Young People	647	52.4%
Elderly / Old People	337	27.3%
People With Disabilities	353	28.6%
People of a Particular Ethnic or Racial Origin	280	22.7%
Other Charities or Voluntary Bodies	267	21.6%
Other Defined Groups	165	13.4%
The General Public / Mankind	416	33.7%

The Charities Commission register also gives information on the types of social and community benefit the charities operating in Barnet provide, shown in Table 11-2 below. (Again, each charity can select more than one purpose or benefit; percentages are given to show the proportion of the total number of charities in Barnet which offer this purpose or benefit.) The high proportion of charities aimed at children and young people (in Table 11-1) and at providing education and training (in Table 11-2) is in part due to the number of schools which are also registered charities.

Table 11-2: Social and community benefit provided by charities operating in Barnet

Type of benefit	Number	Percentage
Education / Training	689	55.8%
Religious Activities	364	29.5%
General Charitable Purposes	358	29.0%
The Prevention or Relief of Poverty	302	24.5%
The Advancement of Health or Saving Lives	225	18.2%
Disability	220	17.8%
Arts/ Culture/ Heritage / Science	188	15.2%
Amateur Sport	164	13.3%
Economic/Community Development / Employment	152	12.3%
Accommodation / Housing	92	7.4%
Overseas Aid/ Famine Relief	86	7.0%
Environment / Conservation / Heritage	75	6.1%
Other Charitable Purposes	70	5.7%
Recreation	69	5.6%
Human Rights / Religious or Racial Harmony / Equality or Diversity	31	2.5%
Animals	13	1.1%
Armed Forces / Emergency Service Efficiency	3	0.2%

Charities are also asked to register the types of activity they undertake – again, charities can select more than one activity. These are shown in Table 11-3 below:

Table 11-3: Types of activities undertaken by charities operating in Barnet

Activities provided	Number	Percentage
Makes Grants to Individuals	215	17.4%
Makes Grants to Organisations	369	29.9%
Provides Other Finance	60	4.9%
Provides Other Human Resources	253	20.5%
Provides Buildings / Facilities / Open Space	342	27.7%
Provides Services	572	46.3%
Provides Advocacy / Advice / Information	338	27.4%
Sponsors or Undertakes Research	100	8.1%
Acts as an Umbrella or Resource Body	122	9.9%
Other Charitable Activities	132	10.7%

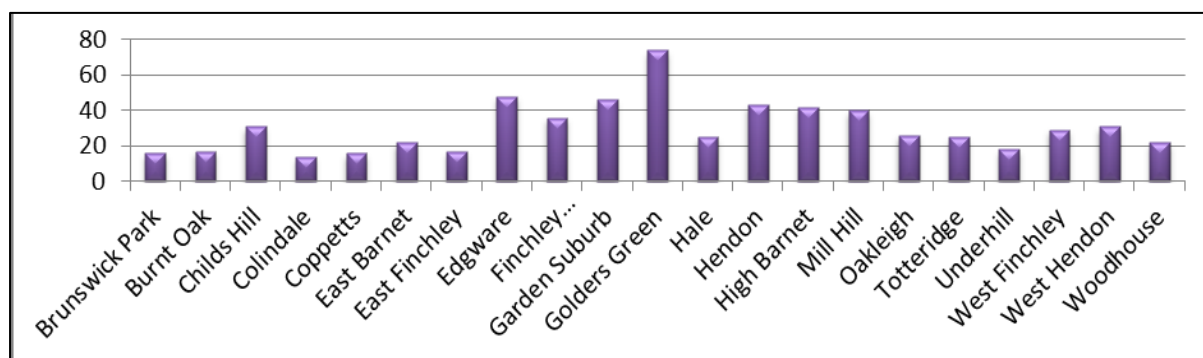
For the 638 charities which are also based in the Borough, it is possible to give a breakdown of the wards in which they are based. The data refers to the registered address of the charity rather than to the address from which it operates services and these may not always be the same. Table 11-4 and Figure 11-1, below, give this breakdown at ward level.

Table 11-4: Geographical breakdown of charities based in and operating in Barnet, by ward

Ward	Number	Percentage*
Brunswick Park	16	2.51%
Burnt Oak	17	2.66%
Childs Hill	31	4.86%
Colindale	14	2.19%
Coppetts	16	2.51%
East Barnet	22	3.45%
East Finchley	17	2.66%
Edgware	48	7.52%
Finchley Church End	36	5.64%
Garden Suburb	46	7.21%
Golders Green	74	11.60%
Hale	25	3.92%
Hendon	43	6.74%
High Barnet	42	6.58%
Mill Hill	40	6.27%
Oakleigh	26	4.08%
Totteridge	25	3.92%
Underhill	18	2.82%
West Finchley	29	4.55%
West Hendon	31	4.86%
Woodhouse	22	3.45%

**Percentage of all Barnet-based charities which are in this ward*

Figure 11-1: Distribution of local charities operating in Barnet, at ward level



11.5 Other Community Groups

In addition to registered charities, there are also a number of less formally constituted community groups across the Borough. These include seven 'Friends of...' groups involved in maintenance or governance of parks and open spaces groups across the Borough; four 'Town Teams', coalitions of local businesses and organisations who look after and are involved in developing town centres; and 23 residents' and community associations.

11.6 Resources and Support

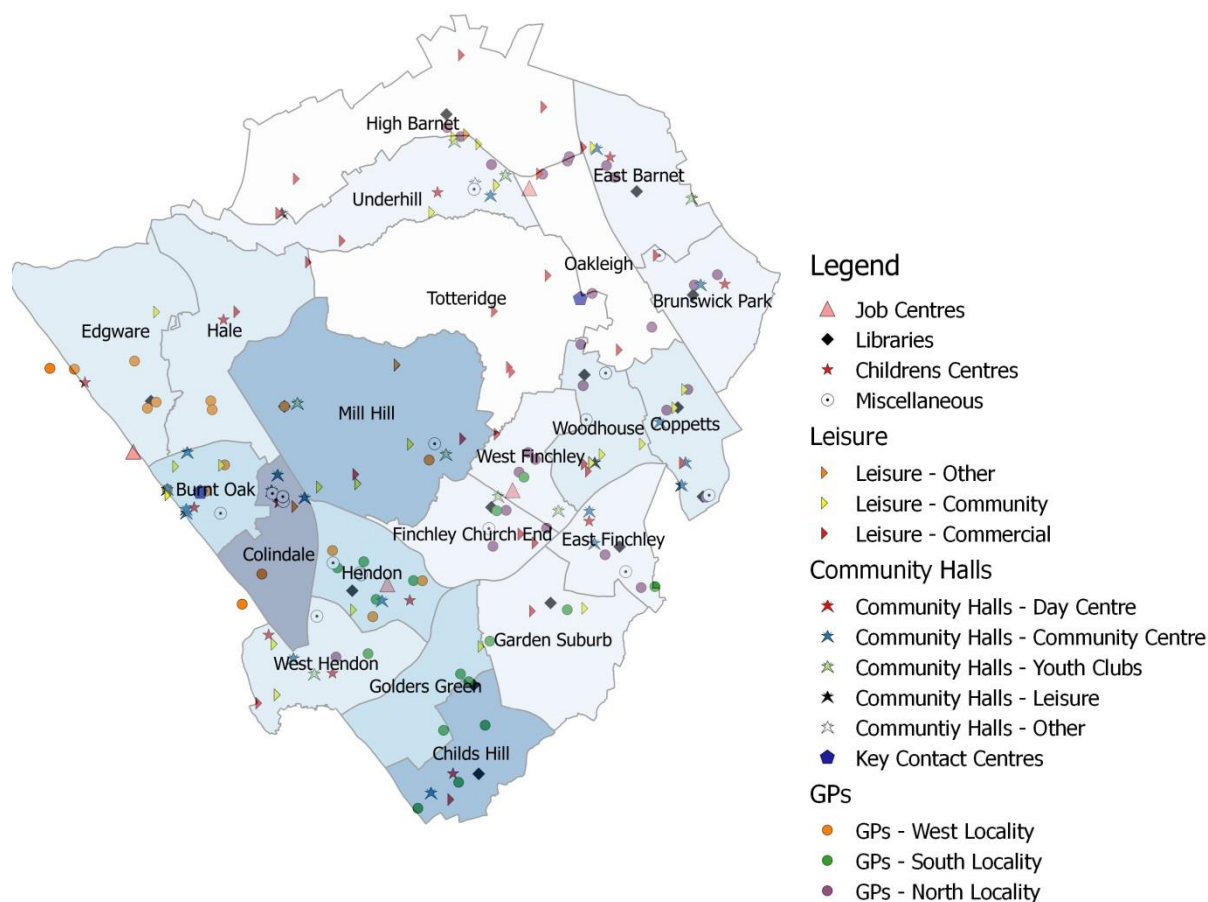
The Council commissions a second Local Infrastructure Organisation Partner – as of 2015/16 this is CommUNITY Barnet – to strengthen the local voluntary and community sector, offer expert advice and support, and ensure VCS organisations are represented in Council decisions. This role is a key enabler for the local VCS.

The Council also makes grant funding available to the voluntary sector. In 2014/15 the total funding available through the Council's Corporate Grants Programme was £104,390.

Physical assets – land and property – which are being used for community benefit are also considered community assets. Some of these are Council buildings primarily used by voluntary and community groups, but others have Council services provided from them or are owned by other public sector stakeholders. A map of these physical assets, as of November 2014, is shown at Figure 11-2 below.

The map shows that these assets are clustered around town centres. The numbers are sparser in the North West of the Borough and in parts of some central Barnet wards (Mill Hill, Totteridge). There may be a case to review the distribution of some facilities which might be well located in more residential areas, such as day centres and community centres, in these parts of the Borough.

Figure 11-2: Map of community assets in Barnet



The Council also puts some resource into the voluntary and community sector through services it commissions from VCS groups. A breakdown of spend by location (charities based in Barnet; charities based in central London or charities based elsewhere in London or the UK) is given in table 11-5 below.

Table 11-5: Total Council spend with charities in 2014/15, by location

Spend by Location (2014/15)		
Locality	Total Spend	%
Barnet	£10,718,331.26	35.3%
Central London	£3,000,154.48	9.9%
Other	£16,669,799.23	54.9%
Grand Total	£30,388,284.97	100.0%

A further breakdown of spend with charities is given for the Adults and Children's Delivery Units in tables 11-6 and 11-7 below.

Table 11-6: Council spend by location – Adults and Communities (2014/15)

Spend by Location and Delivery Unit - Adults and Communities (2014/15)		
Locality	Total Spend	%
Barnet	£2,148,630.39	20.4%
Central London	£1,364,400.35	13.0%
Other	£7,019,283.43	66.6%
Grand Total	£10,532,314.17	100.0%

Table 11-7: Council spend by location – Children’s services (2014/15)

Spend by Location and Delivery Unit - Children's Services (2014/15)		
Locality	Total Spend	%
Barnet	£2,756,023.80	54.9%
Central London	£558,134.35	11.1%
Other	£1,706,069.46	34.0%
Grand Total	£5,020,227.61	100.0%

The Barnet-based spend on children’s services is much higher than the spend from Adults – once again, this is in part due to the inclusion of schools as registered charities.

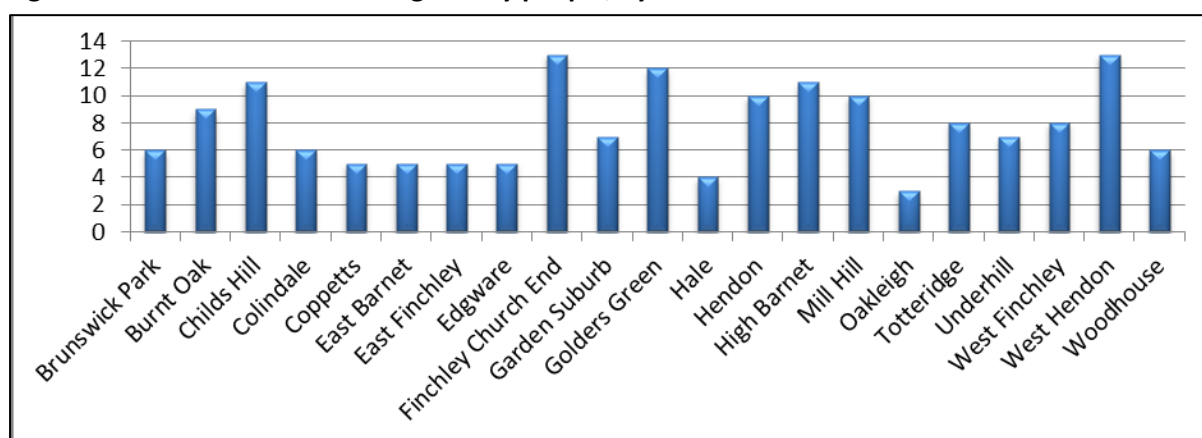
11.7 Type of Provision

11.7.1 Faith-based Activities

A high number of the charities which both operate in and are based in Barnet are located in Golders Green (74 of 638), followed by Edgware (48) and Garden Suburb (46). In each case, a relatively high proportion identifies its beneficiaries as being from particular ethnic or racial groups (67 of the total 166; 40.3%). Considering the demographics of these wards, this suggests that philanthropy within Barnet’s Jewish community may account for a high proportion of locally focused charitable activity.

11.7.2 Services for Older Adults

337 of the 1,255 charities operating in Barnet (27.3%) identify older people as beneficiaries. Just under half of these (164 or 48.7%) are Barnet-based and 173 are from outside the Borough. Figure 11-3 shows a breakdown of the local charities by ward:

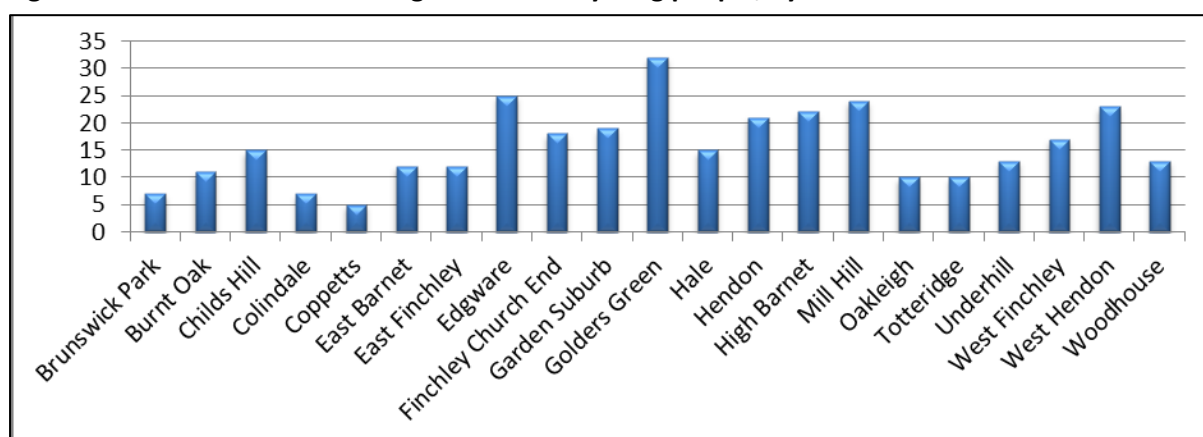
Figure 11-3: Local charities serving elderly people, by ward

A total of 130 charities (from both inside and outside Barnet) provide services for older people with a health-related benefit – 10.3%. 118 (9.4%) benefit older people and provide a disability-related service.

11.7.3 Services for Children

647 of the 1,255 charities operating in Barnet identify children and young people as beneficiaries – more than half (52.5%) of all the charities in the Borough. Just over half of these (331, 51.2%) are Barnet-based and 316 are from outside the Borough. A breakdown of the local charities by ward is shown below.

Figure 11-4: Local charities serving children and young people, by ward

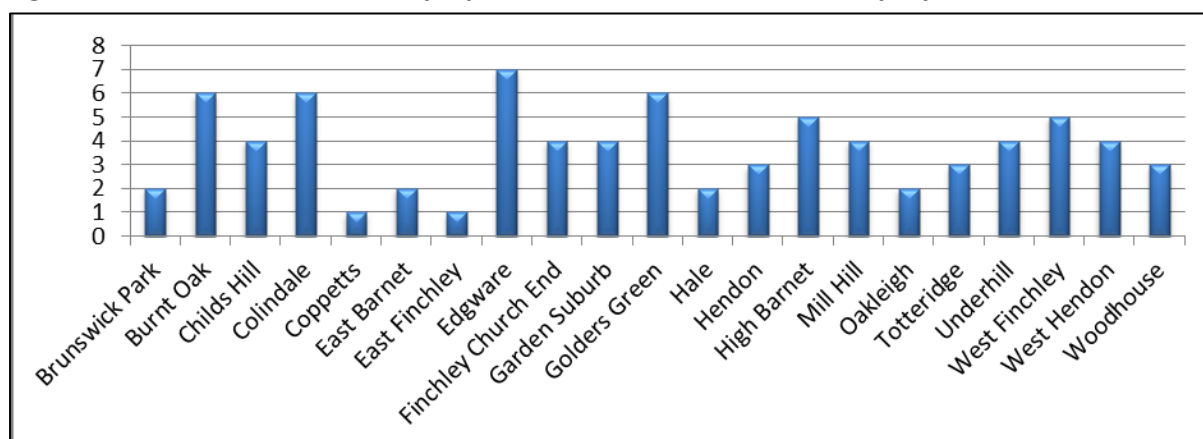


The distribution of children's charities across wards reflects the overall number of charities in each, with particularly high numbers (32) in Golders Green. It is notable that Colindale and Burnt Oak both have relatively low numbers of charities offering services for children and young people (7 of 14 and 11 of 17 respectively).

11.7.4 Services for People with Disabilities

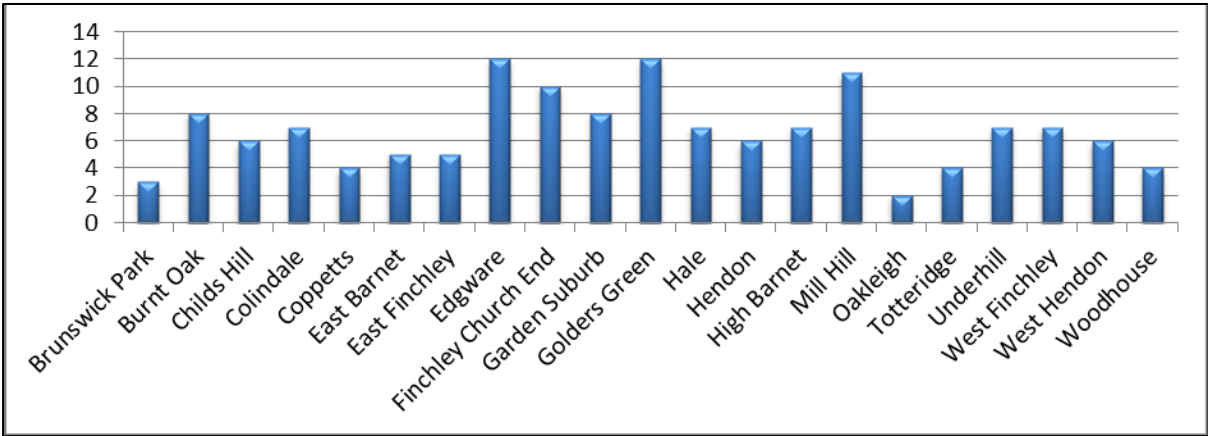
220 charities operating in Barnet (17.5%) identify their charitable benefit as being related to disability and 78 of these are also based in Barnet. The distribution of Barnet-based charities in this group is shown by ward below:

Figure 11-5: Local charities whose purpose or benefit relates to disability, by ward



353 charities operating in Barnet (28.1%) identify people with disabilities as service users and 141 of these are also based in Barnet. Their distribution by ward is shown below:

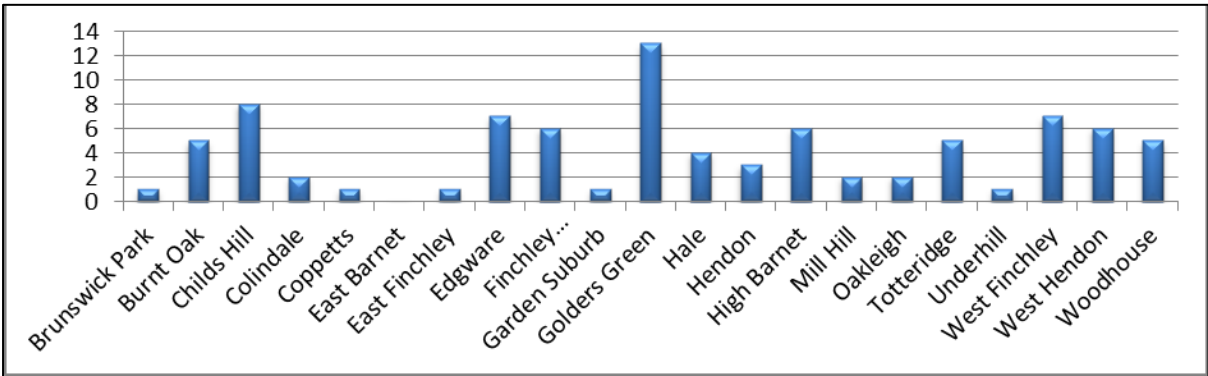
Figure 11-6: Local charities serving people with disabilities, by ward



11.7.5 Services Relating to Health and Physical Activity

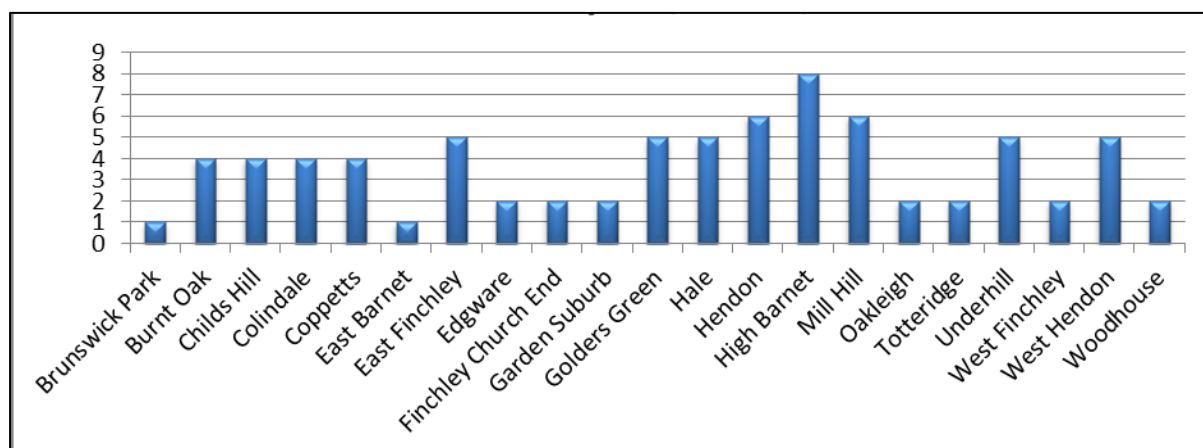
225 charities operating in Barnet (17.9%) identify themselves as providing a health-related benefit. 86 (38.2%) are local and 139 are from outside the Borough. The local charities are shown by ward in the chart below:

Figure 11-7: Local charities purpose or benefit relates to advancing health or saving lives, by ward



164 charities carry out amateur sports-related activities; 77 (46.9%) of these are from Barnet. The locations of those based in Barnet are shown in the chart below:

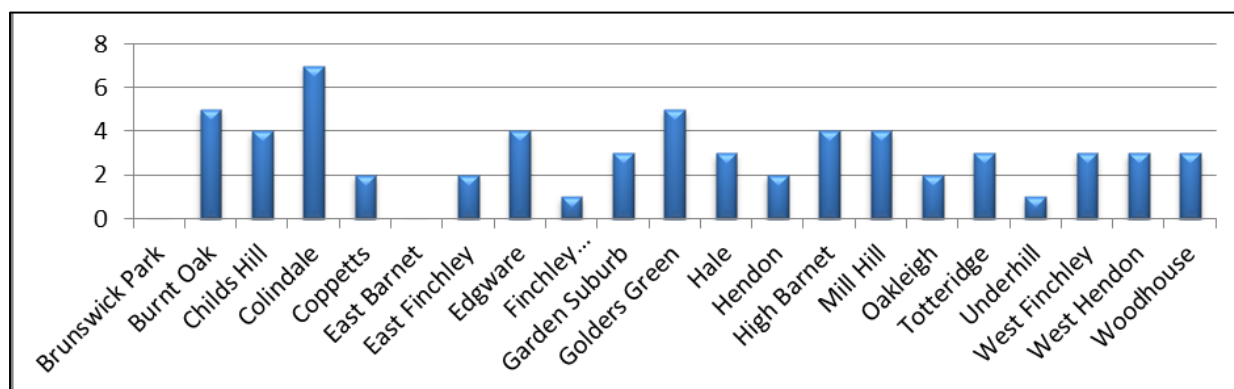
Figure 11-8: Local charities whose purpose or benefit relates to amateur sport, by ward



11.7.6 Economic and Community Development Services

152 charities provide services relating to community or economic development or employment. 61 (40.1%) are from Barnet and 91 are from outside the Borough. The local charities are distributed by ward as follows:

Figure 11-9: Local charities whose purpose or benefit relates to economic or community development and employment, by ward



11.8 Key Issues

Voluntary and community sector activity will be essential in meeting a number of needs already identified through the Council's commissioning plans. Key areas which require VCS provision include the following:

11.8.1 Adults and Health

In **adult social care and health**, work to reduce the need for services and provide more community care, particularly for older people, people with learning disabilities and mental health/ autism needs. In part, this will involve providing services or activities which help people go about their daily lives – shopping, cooking, housework or gardening – but there will also be an important preventative component, providing activities to promote inclusion and reduce isolation.

The distribution of local charities meeting the needs of older adults in Barnet is relatively well matched to the current and projected older adults' population. It is, however, noticeable that the number of charities operating in Barnet who identify a health or disability-related benefit to the work they do is less than 20%, suggesting that there is room either for provision to grow in this area

or to develop more understanding among community groups of how their activities impact on health and wellbeing.

In terms of sport and physical activity, local community sports provision is reasonably well matched to need, with the wards with the highest rates of childhood obesity (Colindale, Burnt Oak and Underhill) all having numbers of community sport charities slightly above average for the Borough. Again, there is potential room to develop further provision in this area.

11.8.2 Children's Services

In **provision for children**, as well as the preventative services identified above there will be a need to increase the availability of childcare in community settings to meet need, development of community provision to enable more holistic delivery models for mental health services, and to build strong relationships with community groups who may be able to improve services such as children's centres by getting more involved in how these are managed and governed.

The Barnet evidence base shows that overall, both the highest numbers of children and young people in Barnet in absolute terms, and the greatest growth in the numbers of children and young people, will be in the west of the Borough, corresponding with Barnet's regeneration programmes. The distribution of services aimed at children is reasonably high in more affluent parts of west Barnet but much lower in those deprived areas – particularly Colindale and Burnt Oak which are also the focus of the regeneration and the areas where the population of children and young people will be largest. This suggests that market shaping activity should consider how to increase local voluntary sector service provision for children and young people in Burnt Oak and Colindale to reflect the likely increase in future need in those areas.

11.8.3 Housing and Economic Development

In areas relating to **housing and economic development**, there will be continuing pressure to support people affected by welfare reforms and/or on-going poverty, reducing the negative impacts of living in poverty. VCS groups' knowledge of, and trusted relationship with, their local communities is vital in reaching people who may otherwise struggle to access services.

VCS activity relating to economic development and unemployment is well developed in Colindale and Burnt Oak, the wards with the highest unemployment rates in Barnet. There are, however, noticeably low levels of provision in East Finchley and Underhill, two wards with significant areas of deprivation.

11.8.4 Environment

Finally, opportunities to promote a better **environment** across the Borough will in part be reliant on getting people more involved in developing and maintaining their local areas. Environmental VCS provision in Barnet is relatively low compared to other sectors – only 75 charities, just under 6% of those operating in the Borough, identify themselves as providing an environmental or heritage benefit. This is underpinned by relatively underdeveloped links between the Council and place-based community groups such as residents' associations with clear opportunities to take a more proactive and coordinated approach to its relationship with such groups in future.

11.8.5 General Capacity

In terms of the general **capacity and physical assets** which underpin these priorities, Barnet has high levels of local VCS activity but this is not evenly distributed across the Borough. This is in part because a significant proportion local charitable activity is strongly focused around faith communities. The Council should think about using its engagement with faith groups and networks to respond to this, gaining a better understanding of how this capacity is currently deployed and learning any lessons about how similar capacity could be leveraged in other parts of the sector.

There are opportunities to support and develop the broader volunteering base through diversifying the offer to volunteers: presenting a broad range of volunteering opportunities (including Timebanking, community development activities, employer supported volunteering and corporate social responsibility), consolidated and coordinated through the core volunteer offer.

The Council's Community Asset Strategy – though it relates only to physical community assets such as land and property – provides an opportunity to rethink physical asset provision including the potential gaps in provision in the North West and centre of the Borough.

11.9 Conclusion and Recommendations

The evidence base for asset-based community development approaches is strong and will be a key part of the approach Barnet needs to take to address the challenges facing health and social care in the coming years.

Barnet has a **strong community asset base** on which to build, with high levels of existing capacity and a wealth of voluntary and community groups. There are opportunities to **work with faith groups** in particular, where community capacity in Barnet is particularly high, to promote stronger relationships between them and other groups in the Borough and to learn lessons about how higher levels of volunteering can be mobilised.

In terms of the overall VCS market, **levels of health-related VCS provision** in Barnet could be further developed, along with charitable activity around community sports. More localised analysis suggests that there may be a current need for **more employment and economic development-related VCS activity in some wards**, and that there will be a need for **more provision of services and activities for children and young people in the west of the Borough** to match the needs of the growing population.

There is a particular gap around **place-based or environmental VCS groups** and/or the relationships the Council maintains with them. The Council needs to consider how to develop and strengthen this sector, as well as strengthen its own links with other existing relevant organisations such as residents' associations.