



HereEast

DELANCEY

Impact Report 20/21

Different makes the difference



Who's Here



The Gantry TG

The Trampery on the Gantry

Atrium A A

Loughborough University London
Institute of Digital Engineering

Atrium B B

BT Sport
BT Studio
MATCHESFASHION Studio
Studio Wayne McGregor
LMA

Atrium C C

Ford: Freedom
Ford: Movement
MATCHESFASHION Studio
Hobs 3D

Atrium D D

Ford: Progress
Staffordshire University London
Saint Espresso

V&A VA

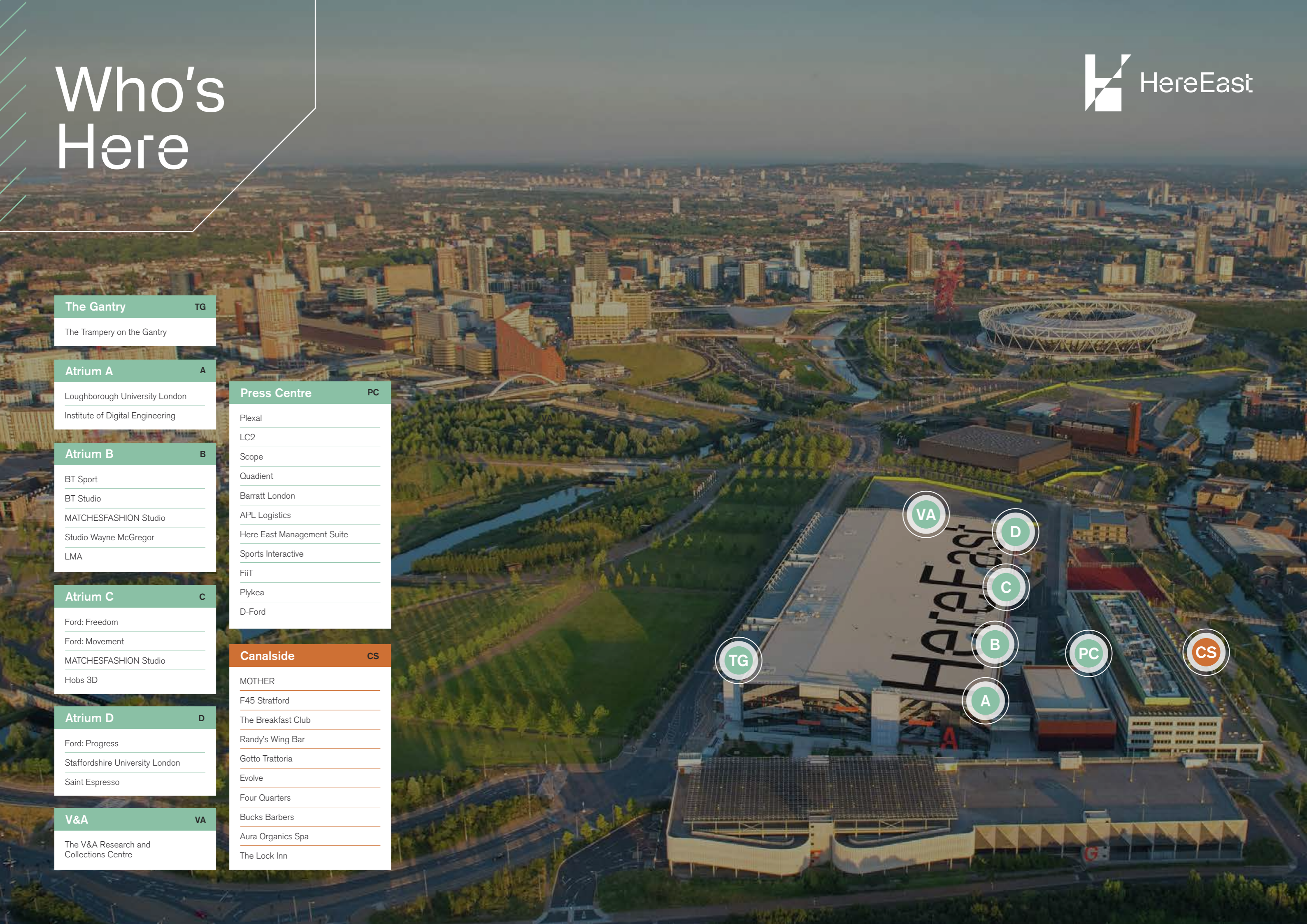
The V&A Research and Collections Centre

Press Centre PC

Plexal
LC2
Scope
Quadient
Barratt London
APL Logistics
Here East Management Suite
Sports Interactive
FiiT
Plykea
D-Ford

Canalside CS

MOTHER
F45 Stratford
The Breakfast Club
Randy's Wing Bar
Gotto Trattoria
Evolve
Four Quarters
Bucks Barbers
Aura Organics Spa
The Lock Inn





Chapters

06

Here East
impact

14

Plexal

20

Humans of
Here East

28

Disability
inclusion

32

The next
generation

42

The creative
industries

48

Impact
through sport

54

Our
retailers

60

Looking
ahead



Foreword

Gavin Poole, CEO, Here East

Different makes the difference

Making a difference is built into the DNA of Here East. To deliver on the Olympic legacy, we are committed to playing our part in the regeneration of East London through job creation, access to education and inclusive community initiatives.

From the moment the proposal for Here East was first put forward to the London Legacy Development Corporation (LLDC) in 2012, through to our doors first opening in 2016 and right up until the present day – a time when businesses and communities have experienced extraordinary disruption – we have strived to do things differently. We have strived to deliver for East London's people and its economy.

And we are succeeding. The International Olympic Committee has described Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park as 'transformational', responsible for breathing new economic life and opportunities into this community.

With Here East and Plexal at its core, Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park is one of the largest and most successful regeneration projects in London, and a model for cities around the world to replicate. While a small minority have criticised its legacy, in leading Here East since we started the project over nine years ago I have seen first-hand the positive impact we are making.

Delivering on our vision

While the landscape has changed beyond recognition, even in this most challenging of years, our ability to work with, and support, communities has not diminished.

Over the past 12 months, Here East has continued to expand. Not only in terms of the growth of the businesses based on our campus – from some of this country's leading universities, to the fast-growth startups delivering the innovations of the future from Plexal, to those making us the largest esports cluster in the UK – but also by continuing to widen the impact we make on East London and beyond.

The pandemic has put significant pressure on jobs, training and mental health, highlighting the challenges we must all face together. And so, we understand the need for businesses across all industries to collaborate with education providers and engage closely with their local communities to make a tangible, long-lasting difference.

In January 2021 we launched a scholarship programme, to support local people through higher education courses at the world-class institutions based on our campus, including LMA and Staffordshire University London.

Conversations around such an initiative have been ongoing as the educational offering on our campus has grown. The socio-economic impact of the pandemic only hardened our resolve and we are delighted to be launching the scheme this year.

Alongside this, we have continued to develop a wide range of programmes and opportunities to promote employment and build relationships with local boroughs. We are very proud to have received national recognition for this work, winning the Grand Final of the commercial category at the National RICS Social Impact Awards 2020. Here East was praised by the judges for its social and environmental impact and was recognised for its benefits to the local community, fulfilling an economic and social need in the area.

Impacting East London

With education disrupted, communities isolated and the employment landscape transformed across the country over the past year, our resolve to be a leader in East London has only been strengthened. It is more important than ever that we deliver on our goals and, where possible, accelerate activity to provide even greater support for our community.

Our tenants have done the same, remaining resilient, adaptable and community-focused. Even while experiencing their own challenges, they have been seen to come together in more innovative ways to support our community.

Their continued commitment to making an impact has been extraordinary, from Hobs 3D and MATCHESFASHION Studio sewing scrubs for NHS staff, to our universities adapting with online open days and new mentoring programmes, to the work of Plexal members Badu Sports and One Family providing food donations and an emergency care fund respectively.

Looking ahead

Together, we have created a strong foundation on which East London – and the city and country as a whole – can build in the coming years.

Beyond our walls and into the wider Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, the London Stadium itself has the potential to generate millions in income once fans are allowed back into stadiums.

The emerging cultural quarter of East Bank will bring Sadler's Wells East, London College of Fashion and BBC Music to East London, alongside the V&A East Project – which will house a new collection and research centre at Here East – making this part of the city a global cultural hub.

But the work does not stop here. The impact of the pandemic will be long-lasting and much more needs to be done to support our businesses and to rebuild communities. We need to continue to listen and act. Of course, this is not a solo project; we continue to work with the London Legacy Development Corporation and through collaboration and joint endeavours we can both achieve so much more.

To recover, London has to put its best foot forward, and Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park is a place I believe East London's residents and businesses are incredibly proud of. In this report, I believe, you will see why.



Image: Ciaran McCrickard

Continuing to deliver for East London

Jasel Nandha, Head of Community and Partnerships, Here East



In 2019, we decided that we wanted to capture and spotlight the work done with and by our tenants for the first time, as an essential part of our impact measurement. Communicating the work that is happening on campus is crucial in demonstrating our value to the region, for sharing best practice with others and promoting a culture of learning, opportunity and transparency.

Our first two impact reports allowed us to present what we have done well, reflect on areas for improvement and set out how we as an organisation are looking to grow and develop. In the context of the past year, and all the challenges that it has brought, we felt it was more important than ever to reflect.

In what has been a difficult 12 months, our tenants have been faced with the same concerns as so many others. The pandemic has had a significant impact on us all, both personally and in our businesses, with many having to furlough staff or even restructure their operations for a digital world. While furlough in particular was a lifeline for many, we cannot underestimate the impact it had on teams and individuals.

In wider society, access to education and youth unemployment have understandably been at the forefront of the discussion over the past year. The pandemic highlighted and exacerbated inequalities that are long-standing and deep-rooted. It is important that these conversations are being

had, but we are under no illusion that the lifting of lockdown will see an end to many of these challenges without hard work, vision and creativity.

Many young people still face barriers in attending university due to socio-economic circumstances and it is right that we work to remove these to ensure students can live up to their full potential. This year we launched our brand-new scholarship programme, which will directly support young people entering higher education.

The scholarship programme will cover the full tuition fees for up to three people each year living in local boroughs. We welcome applications from students who are the first in their family to go to university and where the cost may be prohibitive.

While these scholarships will also offer students work opportunities through our tenants, this is about far more than maintaining a pipeline of talent for our own partners. We believe we have a responsibility to look after the prospects of the incoming workforce generation, to continue developing opportunities in our local area and beyond.

Listening to community needs, being adaptable and empathetic, is at the forefront of our community work. Like many, we have had to adapt to new ways of working, making the best of our new virtual world and reaching new audiences.

We have launched Here East's first podcast series, Listen Here, continued to deliver activities and events online for families and local young people through the LLDC's EAST Education programme, supported Badu Sports' mentoring group, and developed an exciting new partnership with a local social enterprise Beyond the Box.

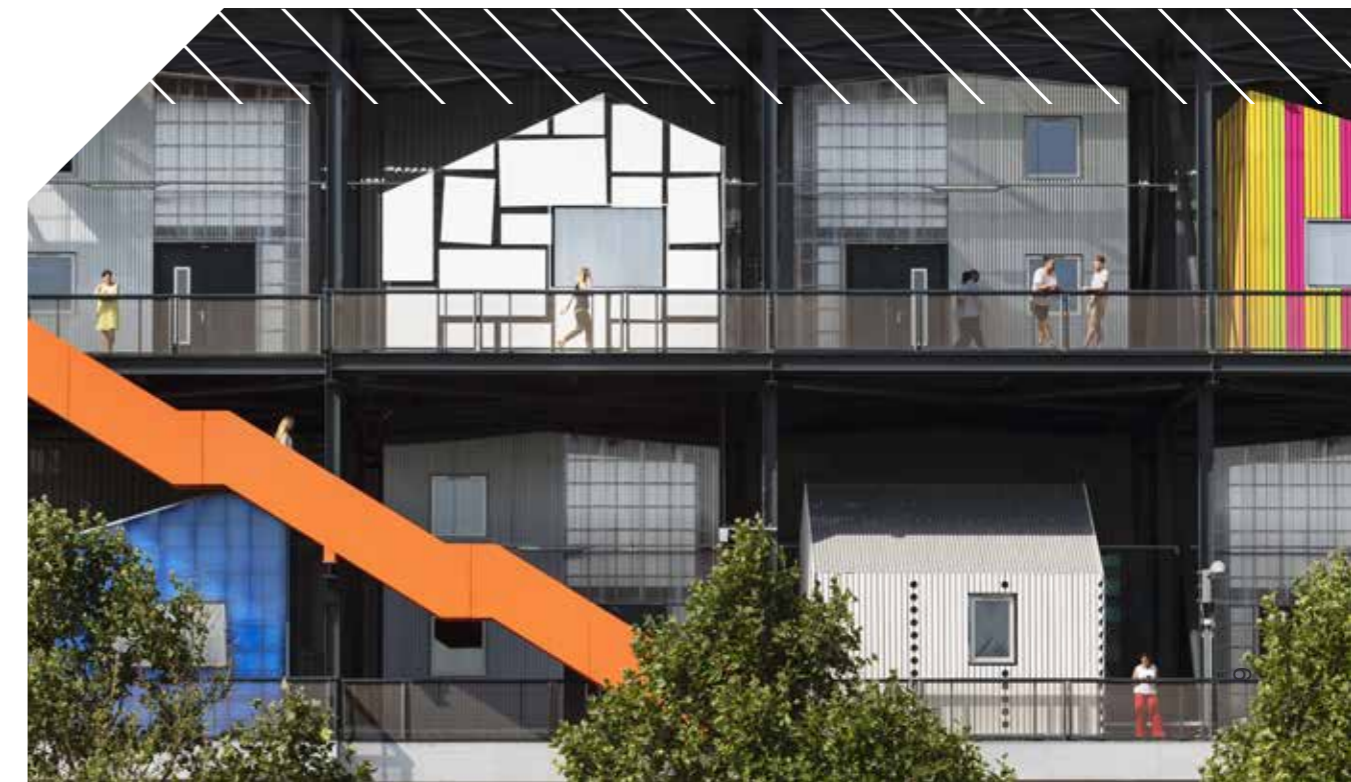
This project will see London's first community space designed entirely by young people – a bold new project aimed at inspiring the next generation of budding engineers, architects, designers and curators from across East London. The People's Pavilion is a co-design project that seeks to flip the script on who gets a say in the design of public space, and we are pleased to have so many Here East partners collaborating on it, including: Hawkins Brown, Hobs 3D, the Bartlett School of Architecture, V&A East, Studio Wayne McGregor, REMI.C.T and many more.

For the post-pandemic recovery to work, start-ups and fast-growth companies need business-ready talent. We need to be able to harness existing talent pools in the next generation and help to develop them. In this report, you will read about the educational opportunities provided by our universities and the brilliant community-minded organisations dedicated to creating a space for young people to thrive.

You will also read about our retailers, who have remained resilient and community-focused in the face of disruption to their day-to-day business, and get an insight into the innovative startups committed to disability inclusion and accessibility, to name just a few.

As we emerge from lockdown and return to in-person convening on a wider scale, I am incredibly excited about what is to come – from the first intake of our scholarship programme, to the many exciting initiatives coming from the impressive work that our tenants are doing. Whether they have been working from home, or enjoying the space of our campus, you will see here just how much incredible work our partners and friends have continued to deliver.

In the year ahead, I am hopeful that we will continue to grow with our tenants and foster even greater community collaboration. We can only do this with the support of our community members and warmly welcome your engagement in the coming months.



Going above and beyond

The challenges of 2020 impacted everyone – from our tenants to the communities around us. But throughout this time, Here East and the businesses based here have continued to go above and beyond to make a difference. While you

will read about much of this work throughout this report, we wanted to share with you the initiatives that kept our communities going in the early stages of the pandemic, and those that will look to build foundations for them to thrive further into the future.

Here East

As part of our rapid response to the pandemic, we offered free parking on-site for key workers needing to access Homerton Hospital. We arranged the delivery of up to 1400 food parcels to local vulnerable people through HMG Foodbank, and significant equipment support to aid food bank logistics. We also worked closely with schools to provide fortnightly grocery boxes to families in need of critical support, as well as care packs to frontline workers at hospitals, including St Thomas', Chelsea & Westminster and the Nightingale.

Our community impact was recognised as best in the commercial category at the Grand Final of the National RICS Social Impact Awards 2020, recognising the built environment's positive and transformational contribution to society. Here East was praised by the judges for its social and environmental impact, as well as for the collaboration and innovation themes which are firmly rooted within the campus' core vision. We were recognised for our benefits to the local community, for fulfilling an economic and social need in the area through our mentorships, community and educational programmes.

Here East was praised by the judges for its social and environmental impact, as well as for the collaboration and innovation themes

We laid out our vision and roadmap to position Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park as the country's leading esports cluster

Our commitment to the next generation remains steadfast with the launch of our scholarship programme, and further collaborations with both our tenants and external partners. We have been working with Beyond the Box Consultants and the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) over the past year to launch the People's Pavilion – a competition to create London's first community space designed entirely by young people. The project provides young people with a full programme of free skills workshops led by industry professionals and creatives from across London.

For National Careers Week in March 2021, we partnered with the London Legacy Development Corporation's education team and Staffordshire University London to deliver a series of workshops for local young people, as part of East Education Careers Week. The online sessions include behind-the-scenes virtual tours, getting insider information on how to perfect your portfolio and learning all about the different jobs involved in engineering.

Supporting the future of talent in these ways allows us to build on our further ambition to drive future industries, In February we launched our new podcast 'Listen Here' that looks at the businesses and trends defining a range of sectors. And with our Esports Feasibility Report, we laid out our vision and roadmap to position Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park as the country's leading esports cluster.

We have continued to welcome new tenants to the campus. Evolve Skateboards – one of the world's leading electric skateboard brands – chose our Canalside as its new home, joining our thriving community of companies working on the future of mobility. We also welcomed Plykea, a company challenging the status quo of kitchen design – who chose Here East as the home for their new London flagship design studio, workshop and kitchen showroom space.



Our tenants: rapid response

Global Disability Innovation Hub

During the first lockdown, GDI Hub worked alongside our international partners and UCL to explore solutions for PPE and ventilation devices, focused around the challenges of a lack of affordable, quality products, trained personnel, manufacturing, production and global suppliers.

ELIEZ

ELIEZ co-created a series of virtual workshops for members with its partner network, digital agency Bravand and the Institute of Chartered Accountants (ICAEW). Sessions showcased inclusive ways of working, implementing best practice initiatives for online meetings.

Studio Wayne McGregor

The pandemic posed significant challenges for the creative industries, with the closure of theatres and studios, and the cancellation of tours. In response to this, Studio Wayne McGregor launched RESET – a professional development programme for dancers – in August 2020 with Here East providing a space for the programme as in-kind support.

LMA

Building and opening a brand-new state-of-the-art campus during the height of the pandemic was a challenge for LMA, but it successfully adapted in its teaching and engagement – pivoting some of the course content and how this was delivered.



Badu Sports

From the beginning of the pandemic, Badu Sports recognised that its community would be among the hardest hit, immediately getting to work providing food delivery support for the local area, from the Press Centre at Here East. This ended up stretching to Tower Hamlets, Islington and even Westminster. It also set up a range of services including a helpline for parents, as well as an online chat function for its young people. For those without access to a computer, a laptop loaning scheme was implemented to ensure anyone could contact Badu Sports when they needed to. Plexal also provided a quiet study space for those whose home environment was not conducive to remote learning.

FiiT

While many have struggled with the pressures and impact of lockdown, others have felt more productive from cutting out the stresses associated with going to work. This has led to 40% of people reporting that they exercised more in 2020 than they had previously. FiiT's home workouts enabled this for many. It also provided a 25% discounted membership to all NHS workers.

MOTHER

MOTHER provided good, nutritious food to people during the pandemic – offering juice, cakes and sausage rolls to the three local hospitals. The team there also ran initiatives with local community food kitchen Made in Hackney, providing plant-based meals to vulnerable members of our community.

Randy's Wing Bar

Having been based at Here East for nearly six years, Randy's Wing Bar felt a responsibility to support the community in Hackney Wick, providing free school meals during school holidays. The response to this will see Randy's extend its support for the long-term, continuing to work with charities to fund this kind of service moving forward.

One Family

Plexal member One Family has been working with hospitals, schools and care groups, who are on the frontline of providing support to those most vulnerable, to provide care packages, food and grants for doctors, nurses, teachers and families who have been directly affected by the pandemic.

MATCHESFASHION Studio

MATCHESFASHION Studio joined and assisted with logistics for the Emergency Designer Network, a volunteer-based network of design companies brought together to provide scrubs and personal protective equipment for key workers in hospitals.

Hobs 3D

3D printing studio Hobs 3D used its technology to produce perspex visors for the NHS distribution network.

Plexal: Co-working and collaboration at the heart of Here East

Read about Plexal's continued commitment to building a more accessible space for all of its members and how LORCA is accelerating the UK's most exciting cyber startups



Supporting startups and investing in accessibility

Kate Pearman, Chief Operating Officer, Plexal

The past year has crystallised for us what Plexal's mission is, and the role we play in the journeys of our members.

It has been an immensely challenging period for many of our members, especially the smaller, early-stage companies whose revenue streams have been affected by the pandemic. We had to pivot very quickly, putting the right health and safety measures in place to make sure that members who needed to come into our workspace could continue to do so safely. We have also taken on a campaigning role through our Startup Tracker, which highlighted the fact that early-stage startups were struggling to attract venture capital as investors became more risk-averse.

More than that, we've become partners with our community.

Our virtual events programme and social activities – which have included meetups for founders, women in business and our LGBTQ+ members – bring our community together.

We've also introduced more office hours, which enable us to provide tailored support. Whether it is helping founders tap into government support or making introductions

for members that have led to them winning contracts and investment, we have a deeper understanding of what our community needs and we're actively helping them grow.

When I look at our community now, it's stronger than ever and there are so many collaborations happening. Our members have also adapted and risen to the challenges faced by society and our economy. MOONHUB has enabled organisations to deliver remote training, FiiT delivers online fitness classes, SureCert has developed a platform for NHSX to connect people with volunteering opportunities, and our entire community rallied behind Badu Sports over Christmas to help them support families in East London with food and hampers. James Kong, who is the founder of Alp Technologies, is helping fellow members source grant funding by sharing his expertise.

This was always the vision for Plexal, and it is fantastic to see it come to fruition.

Accessibility and inclusion have been priorities for Plexal in the last year

Plexal case study

Dom Hyams, Founder, Tiny Man Digital



Tiny Man Digital is a digital marketing agency that enables companies of all shapes and sizes to shine online. From branding to strategy and content creation, we help companies adapt to the digital-first world in their marketing and communications.

I was born with Osteogenesis imperfecta, commonly known as Brittle Bones, and through my experience of disability and disability-related organisations, I found a natural connection with those looking to create more accessible and inclusive content.

This is a new venture for me. I was on furlough over the summer and took on several freelance digital marketing jobs. When I was set to be made redundant, I was pushed to start Tiny Man Digital, which quickly grew to the point where I was taking on additional resource to meet demand.

This work led to Purple Goat Agency approaching me to join their Influencer and Digital Marketing agency on a full-time basis. We had very aligned values which made working together a pleasure - after all, collaboration is king!

Plexal and Here East have been brilliant at connecting me with like-minded organisations and people. Together, we are in the process of helping a number of organisations in the community with their digital marketing needs.

Meanwhile, our cyber ecosystem has found ways to come together online through events like LORCA Live as well as our roundtables and masterclasses for startups. In addition, we've strengthened links between the UK and Oman's startup ecosystems through the Rapid Innovation Accelerator: the cross-border, virtual-first accelerator we delivered for the UK Oman Digital Hub.

Putting accessibility first

Accessibility and inclusion have been priorities for Plexal in the last year. As a delivery partner for the East London Inclusive Enterprise Zone (ELIEZ), we've worked with partners in our community to champion the inclusive innovation sector through our accelerator for 30 cohort members.

On top of this, we have made Plexal more accessible for people with a range of seen and unseen disabilities by introducing height-adjustable desks, improving the acoustics of

our main hot-desking zone and many more subtle but impactful changes. Being part of an inclusive innovation ecosystem at Here East has meant that we've made these changes collectively, sharing insights, ideas and expertise. It's so important to us that Plexal is a place that all innovators can access.

Innovation takes an ecosystem

As we begin to recover from the pandemic, the members of our workspace and our programmes have one thing in common: they value coming together as a community and solving problems together. And whether they do that using hybrid working models, by collaborating with members on-site or by engaging with us virtually, Plexal's mission is to bring these communities together and enable meaningful collaboration to happen.



Growing the UK's most connected cyber innovation ecosystem

Saj Huq, Director of Innovation, Plexal

The past year has shone a light on just how mission-critical cybersecurity is to every part of society and our economy. From enabling people to work remotely and defending critical national infrastructure, to maintaining trust and protecting healthcare organisations when they're at their most vulnerable, cyber startups have risen to the challenge. And Plexal's role has been to help those startups scale and address the challenges of both industry and the public sector.

Our London Office for Rapid Cybersecurity Advancement (LORCA) programme has been the cornerstone of this work. Over the past few years, we have built the UK's most connected cybersecurity ecosystem, which brings together startups, industry, technology leaders, academic experts, security experts, policymakers and investors into a collaborative community. This now spans the length and breadth of the country, connecting London with cyber hubs like Manchester and Cheltenham, and link-ups with global hubs in Israel, Singapore, the US and more.

We have applied Plexal's open innovation approach to LORCA, to galvanise startups around specific challenge areas and also use insights from buyers and investors to shape the growth of those startups. The proof is in the numbers and the amazing success stories we have to show.

We've now delivered five accelerators that have supported 72 cyber startups from the UK and abroad. Our members have raised over £177m in investment, generated over £37m in revenue and won more than 1,200 contracts and counting. They have created over 600 jobs and delivered over 900 proofs of concept since joining LORCA.

Meanwhile, our member VIVIDA, which delivers cyber training in a story-led, immersive way, has recently won a contract through LORCA with a major UK bank. This is an example of how, with the right conditions and methodologies, we can direct innovation happening within the startup community towards solving a specific challenge or addressing an opportunity for businesses and society.

I'm also extremely proud of the way our cyber members have stepped up during the pandemic. To name just a few examples, CAPSLOCK is making the sector more diverse by enabling people to retrain and pick up the cyber skills industry needs, while Threat Status offered its data breach monitoring services free of charge to health organisations worldwide.

Our members have raised over £177m in investment, generated over £37m in revenue and won more than 1,200 contracts and counting

LORCA case study

Jonathan Slater, Co-founder, CAPSLOCK

CAPSLOCK's intensive training boot-camp re-skills adults into cybersecurity professionals within six months. Designed in collaboration with industry leaders including Lloyds Banking Group, BT and Dell, we equip students with the skills to pursue competitive careers in cyber-security.

Being a part of Plexal is an important collaboration for us given we're still at pre-seed stage. We're able to collaborate with industry leaders and the wider Plexal team, who offer crucial innovation support. It's helped us to hire better talent, raise equity funding and secure grant funding.

For a company looking to raise pre-seed funding, the pandemic has been a difficult period. Angel investors and funds decreased their appetite to make early-stage investments.



However, we're fortunate to have developed our product around online education delivery, so we were not negatively impacted by remote working.

Despite the challenges, we have been able to raise £540,000 in funding, which allows a full-time team of eight to operate on a 12-month runway. We've enrolled 85 learners onto our career-changing cyber course and we're likely to enrol another 100 by the end of 2021. We have 32% women on our course – above industry standard – and are proud to be taking active steps to increase diversity within the sector.

Lockdown and remote working hasn't been a barrier – we quickly pivoted to make sure all our workshops, mentoring, networking events, trade missions and roundtables could be delivered wholly online. And while we're all extremely keen to get together at the soonest opportunity, working remotely hasn't been a barrier when it comes to achieving the ecosystem-wide collaboration we aim to engineer.

One highlight that was a big moment for Plexal was when Oliver Dowden, Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, visited us during London Tech Week for a socially distanced meeting. He wanted to learn more about the ecosystem we had built, and we were able to introduce him to our fast-growth members such as Privitar and Heimdal Security, who he was immensely impressed by.

And we have only just begun. In June 2021, we'll be turbocharging the growth of six graduates of our accelerator on our Ignite programme, and we'll continue to work closely with industry on specific challenge areas that cut across sectors.

As for the way we engage with the Here East campus, we have strong relationships with all of the academic institutions that are located here. This offers a potential talent pipeline for our members. We're keen to increase our engagement with students across the campus as we work to make cyber more diverse, and we want to encourage a two-way flow of insights and ideas between Plexal and our neighbours on campus.

As the UK's economic recovery begins, cybersecurity will continue to play a central role when it comes to creating jobs, keeping people safe online and unlocking the opportunities created by technology. Investment into cyber startups is at record levels, demand from industry for security innovation is growing and we have a hyper-connected ecosystem that's been built over the last few years. We're primed and ready to build on these strong foundations.

Humans of Here East

Meet just a few of the inspiring people on our campus working to make an impact, with the support of Plexal and The Trampery on the Gantry





Nana Badu
Founder, Badu Sports

Badu Sports focuses on educational and community development, using sports as our initial tool of engagement to achieve our aims. We aim to offer positive role models, advice and guidance, so that from an early age our young people form the positive habit of goal setting.

While we provide a high standard in physical education to develop a healthier body, we also provide mentoring to develop a healthier mind. In addition to this, we maintain high of expectations for all our members staff to ensure that all children we engage develop to the best of their abilities.

We knew as soon as the pandemic began that the families and schools we work with were going to be hit the hardest. There is a poverty of knowledge that means many in our community do not know where to go to access the support they need. We aimed to bridge that gap, by being a place that supported them through all their needs – from food distribution, to mental health support, to a space to work.

Here East and Plexal were pivotal in providing us with the space and resources we needed to deliver for our community. All of the organisations here get it and want to help. It is a campus full of genuinely good people.



Cllr Mete Coban MBE
CEO, My Life My Say

I am the founder of My Life My Say - a youth-led, non-partisan charity on a mission to empower young people to participate in democracy. Young people have been disproportionately impacted by the effects of the pandemic, so it's incredibly important that this generation has a voice in shaping their future.

As we have not been able to travel around the country or bring people together face-to-face, the past year forced us to rethink our digital strategy and increase our online presence. This led to a huge increase in digital engagement and a social media reach of over three million people, which has been hugely beneficial for our growth and impact.

We published a report including the experiences of young people throughout the pandemic, which we are using as an advocacy tool to challenge the government to do more for young people. It is so important that we make sure the lessons of the pandemic are not forgotten, because there is so much good that can be taken from this challenge.

At Here East, you are surrounded by so many inspiring organisations. Being part of such a diverse community has meant we have formed some amazing partnerships that would have been much harder to access otherwise. This has massively contributed to the scale of our growth.



Andrew Vargerson
 Founder, DesignEast

We are a design consultancy that specialises in surface design, large format print and signage production. We are bridging the gap between design agency and sign-maker to tackle what I see as an understanding gap between design and production. Thinking this way helps us to create well-thought-out designs that not only work, but look good.

Being part of the Trampery on the Gantry has been fantastic for collaboration, giving us an opportunity to work with most of the studios based here on the branding of their own studio spaces, as well as with the wider Here East and Plexal community.

We have been lucky enough to have had a sufficient workload throughout the pandemic – in large part due to increased demand for social distancing signage. I would like to think that we have made a difference in keeping people aware of the risks.

The sheer scale of some of the projects we produced at a time when many companies were struggling has given me the confidence to take on the next stage of our business growth. We are in the process of moving to a bigger space on-site and are looking at growing the team further.



Lydia Thornley
 Founder, Studio Lydia Thornley

I'm a designer, creative director, reportage sketcher and workshop presenter. I work with clients as a design partner, with collaborators and on my own projects. My work is done to shape brands, tell stories, help people to see the world differently and build connections.

At the Trampery on the Gantry I'm in a community of fellow creators. This has enormous value as an inspiring working environment and a "hive mind" to ask questions of. It's also exciting to be a part of the innovative spirit of the wider Here East community, and the cultural and creative communities of Hackney Wick and East Bank.

During the pandemic I have broadened my creative practice. I have begun to present online workshops and adapted the design work I do on communications, as clients have pivoted their own activities online.

As a Trampery member in a co-working space who could work from home, I elected to do so to make more, safer space for my studio-mates, staying connected virtually. It has been isolating at times, but we have a Slack channel and WhatsApp group, the Trampery has provided online resources and workshops for members and I'm making a phased return to co-working.



Teoman Ayas and Gerhild Ayas
Founders, MIMStudios

We are a multidisciplinary design studio specialising in architecture. We are a young practice, passionate about developing designed projects. Our backgrounds are in advanced 3D design using various digital tools. These tools enable us to approach design at various scales, from jewellery to furniture, interiors to stand-alone buildings.

We have been living in East London for a long time. As internationals ourselves, we've always identified with its creative and diverse community. So, when we moved our practice into the Trampery on the Gantry it only made sense for us. The creative community within Here East captures the essence of East London. Our collaborations have been

an exchange of ideas and experiences with other creatives.

The pandemic led us to embrace the digital tools we use more than ever. We were able to develop design ideas regardless of time and place, and adapted stricter organisation of the information within our digital files. Doing so enabled more efficient communication with our collaborators.

However, during the pandemic our natural means of networking and community activities stalled for obvious reasons. So, we looked for alternative local organisations which offered scheduled meetings online, increasing our exposure. This gave us the opportunity to mingle again, albeit from behind a screen.



Dami Hastrup
Founder and CEO, MOONHUB

MOONHUB takes the existing Learning and Development (L&D) in corporate companies and converts them into virtual reality interactive training scenarios to allow for higher return on investment and engagement from L&D spend.

Our patent-pending spot and jot scoring technology helps companies capture vital data from their L&D content that they're not fully utilising. Our platform is easy to scale and is geared towards enterprise companies with many users.

We joined Plexal in 2018 and since then our growth has been exponential. We received investment from Sports Interactive studio director Miles Jacobson, we were featured in the Evening Standard's Progress 1000,

were interviewed on BBC Breakfast and 5Live, and were winners of the East London Innovators award. None of this would have been possible had we not been a part of Plexal and Here East. Having a community around us to support us has been priceless.

As you can imagine, being a start-up in the midst of a global pandemic that is toppling the biggest of companies isn't a walk in the park. However, owing to the nature of work and as an innovative team, we were not only able to survive but thrive, with more clients, an investment round that's kicked off strongly and a larger team.

A home for disability inclusion

The Global Disability Innovation Hub and the East London Inclusive Enterprise Zone are addressing the pressing need for inclusive innovation



New ways of thinking about disability innovation

Louise Gebbett, Public Engagement Lead, Global Disability Innovation Hub

The Global Disability Innovation (GDI) Hub was launched following the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, which stood out as the most accessible Olympics and Paralympics ever.

GDI Hub evolved from a desire to uphold this legacy and maintain focus on driving disability innovation. Operational in 35 countries, we work with 70 partners, delivering projects across a portfolio of £50m. To date we have reached 12 million people by developing bold approaches, building innovative partnerships and creating ecosystems to accelerate change.

Through Here East, we have been able to amplify that message and work with like-minded organisations, pioneering new ideas, technologies and learning. In the early stages of the first lockdown, we worked alongside our international partners and UCL to explore solutions for PPE and ventilation devices, focused around the challenges of a lack of affordable, quality products, trained personnel, manufacturing, production and global suppliers.

Our MSc programme in Disability Design and Innovation is delivered across three different academic institutions – UCL, Loughborough University London (both founding partners of GDI Hub) and London College of Fashion.

As part of our UK Aid funded AT2030 programme, we also work with Loughborough University London on the Sport Against Stigma programme, where we will air

Paralympic coverage for free to over 150 million people in 30 countries in sub-Saharan Africa. Wrapping around a research and schools programme, linked to the IPC's "I'm Possible" programme, we will tackle stigma through para sport and community engagement.

Recently we were announced as the world's first World Health Organisation Collaborating Centre on Assistive Technology. Never has there been a more important time to address the needs of disabled and older people, as globally we look to build back fairer from the COVID-19 pandemic. The Collaborating Centre status recognises the value and impact of assistive technology on the lives of people globally.

We have also expanded our digital reach to a global audience. Our webinar series attracts audiences across 60 different countries, helping to amplify our message further.

The focus on accessibility across Here East is vital for us, both with regard to our own accessibility and the campus' ability to attract a number of other disability-based organisations. Being here means being part of the innovation community and it is a real privilege to be able to contribute to this, as well as benefit from the work of others. Here East puts organisations in a unique position to amplify each other's voices and make a bigger impact overall.

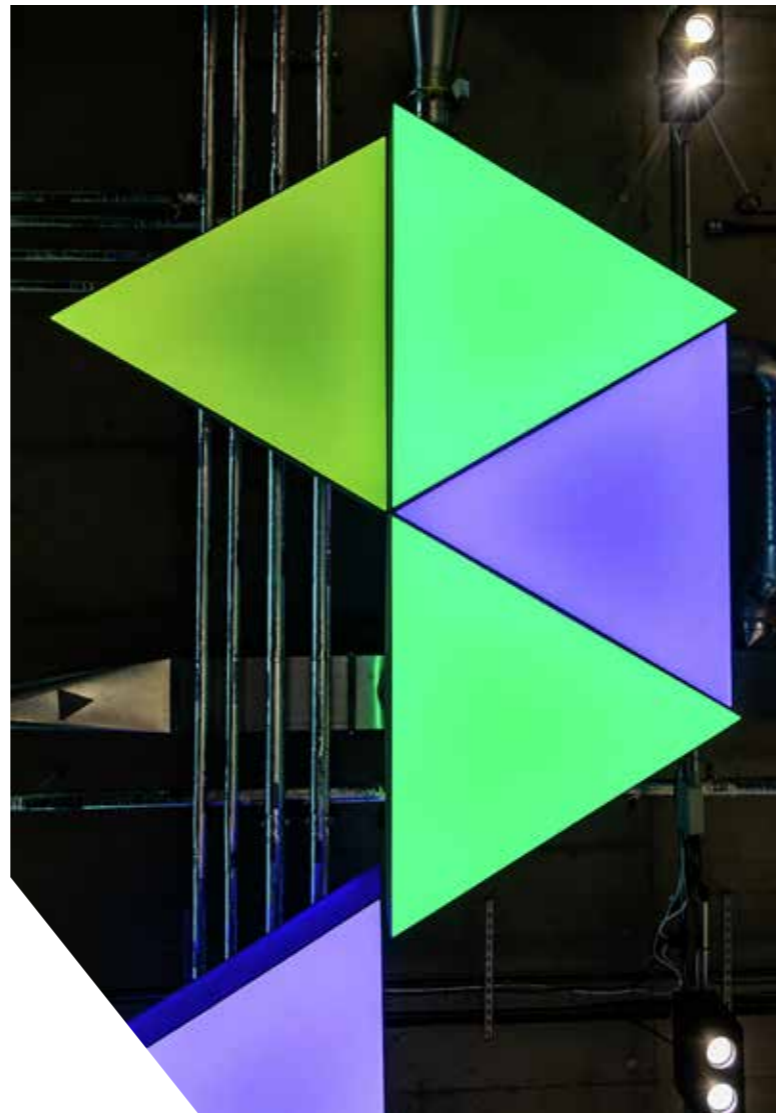


Image: Claran McCrickard

Recently we were announced as the world first World Health Organisation Collaborating Centre on Assistive Technology

The inclusive enterprise movement

Bhavna Malkani, Programme Lead, ELIEZ and Anike Mlemchukwu, Founder, Lapapo Special Needs

The East London Inclusive Enterprise Zone (ELIEZ) is a community of entrepreneurs, business leaders and design thinkers who are disabled or whose work focuses on disabled people.

The ELIEZ consortium is formed of 13 partners, led by UCL. This includes Here East, Plexal, LLDC, GDI Hub, Disability Rights UK, Loughborough University London, London College of Fashion and Barclays Eagle Labs. Together, the network delivers groundbreaking programmes and projects in disability innovation, and has given unlimited support to 30 entrepreneurs.

Bhavna Malkani, programme lead at ELIEZ, says: "A large part of the programme delved into how workspaces can be more accessible. With a panel led by Disability Rights UK, ELIEZ's partners found a deeper understanding of the practical challenges that people with a range of seen and unseen disabilities face.

"This helped Plexal to become a place where disabled and non-disabled innovators collaborate, co-create solutions and shape the future of inclusive innovation."

ELIEZ co-created a series of virtual workshops for members with its partner network, digital agency Bravand, and the Institute of Chartered Accountants (ICAEW). Sessions showcased inclusive ways of working, implementing best practice initiatives for online meetings.

"We ran an adaptive fashion hack with students at London College of Fashion, and Barclays Eagle Labs showed students how 3D printers can be used for adaptive fashion

for wheelchair users," says Bhavna. "We also collaborated with Disability Rights UK to share our members' experiences, so students could learn about innovation in the adaptive fashion space."

Looking to improve accessibility in all aspects of business, ELIEZ co-produced an accessible communications guide alongside Bravand, to help companies create accessible content. ELIEZ also released a podcast – Inclusive Innovators, hosted by Matt Pierri, founder of SociAbility – which shares under-recognised and inspiring stories of inclusive innovation.

The inaugural ELIEZ cohort included Lapapo Special Needs, a community platform to share knowledge about disabilities, and for parents of children with special needs to find products and information. Founder Anike Mlemchukwu says: "We combine a product marketplace with an information hub that shares parents' stories and information from professionals. We are trying to become a one-stop-shop if you have a child with special needs.

"One of the benefits of being part of ELIEZ was getting a mentor, whose expertise has been incredibly valuable. He challenged me to re-evaluate preconceptions about Lapapo through market research."

The ELIEZ network continues to pioneer for change in the disability innovation space. By accelerating the development of products and services that address unmet needs, it creates inclusive spaces where innovators can flourish and grow.

Supporting the next generation

Here East and our tenants are dedicated to creating opportunities for East London's next generation to thrive



Training the future of Sports Interactive

Matt Carroll, Chief Operating Officer, Sports Interactive, Aaron Hesse-Owusu, Abdullah Patel, Luke Hume, Trainees, Sports Interactive

We have been exploring the idea of offering a traineeship at Sports Interactive for some time now, to find a pathway for people who live close to the studio to work with us.

With a successful internship programme already established, we felt that we had the groundwork to do this. And so, we created a two-year fixed-term placement, bringing in three trainees on the London Living Wage. They will take on three placements of eight months throughout the scheme, handing over to one another at the end of each secondment.

We welcomed three brilliant trainees into our first intake back in September, from around 90 applicants – Aaron Hesse-Owusu, Luke Hume and Abdullah Patel. The aim will be for three new trainees to come onto the programme each year, with six in total on the scheme at any one time, who can support each other and create a network for themselves.

How did you each come to hear about the trainee scheme?

Aaron Hesse-Owusu: I first heard about it through Badu Sports. Mr [Nana] Badu and the other staff members had always been incredibly supportive of me and could see I wanted something better for myself. And it was while I was applying for university that they told me about the traineeship. I immediately thought that it sounded like something I needed to grasp with both hands.

Abdullah Patel: Like Aaron, my story starts with Badu Sports, without whom I wouldn't have found out about this opportunity. I was already looking at apprenticeships and when I saw there was the opportunity for three placements on this scheme, and that I could get such a range of experience, I gave it a shot.

Luke Hume: One of my friends already worked here as a quality assurance tester. He told me about the scheme and it came at a time when I wasn't really enjoying what I was doing. It was the right opportunity at the right time.

Had you been interested in going into the gaming industry previously?

AHO: If you'd asked to me before this opportunity did I want to go into gaming, I would have just thought that the only options were creating the game, or posting videos playing the game! I didn't know how many roles there could be.

AP: I had actually been looking at accounting apprenticeships and knew that I wanted to do something where I could apply my maths skills. And so, the opportunities in QA testing and business analytics particularly appealed, because I could use those while also trying new things.



The aim will be for three new trainees to come onto the programme each year, with six in total on the scheme at any one time

Tell us about each of your current placements and how you're finding it.

AHO: I'm in the communications team at the moment, dealing with everything from advertising opportunities to removing pirate copies of the game from the internet. I don't think I've ever had a day that's the same. There are always new challenges.

LH: My first placement has been in customer support. When you help someone and save their game, it feels fantastic. But if people aren't happy, they will let you know about it! I've learnt not to take any of that to heart though. People are passionate about the game and we want to make it the best experience possible for them.

AP: I'm working as a QA tester right now – logging bugs and processing them so they can be fixed. I love gaining new skills, and so I have learnt to navigate the game, to spot bugs just by trying things and looking around the page to see what works and what doesn't.

You've not actually been into the studio since starting the traineeship. What's been your experience of working from home?

AHO: At first, I thought it would stop me from showing my ability. But I've now got used to this environment, and Sports Interactive were

brilliant in giving us all a budget for our mental health and logistical spending, as well as the occasional takeaway! They're only small things but they make a massive difference.

LH: It was strange at first. I quite enjoyed not having a commute but it is strange to think I've made really good friends with some of the people I work with, but have never met them!

As you look ahead to the second year of your traineeship, what is the one thing each of you wants to gain from the scheme?

AHO: I want to stay at Sports Interactive, but if that can't happen then I want to ensure I at least take the fundamental and key skills that can get me into a great position for the future.

LH: I will continue to work hard, and hopefully do good work that will get me recognised. I'd love to stay on after the two years or move into a similar area at least.

AP: I'd definitely like to pick up some more skills and I can't wait to learn more new things. I don't know much about the customer support or communications areas and so it will be really interesting to find out more.



The power of widening participation

**Kemi Hassan, Senior Outreach Officer,
The Bartlett Faculty of the Built Environment, UCL**

The Bartlett is UCL's Faculty of the Built Environment. From architecture and planning to energy and development, we tackle some of the world's greatest challenges with a mission to build a better future for everyone.

As part of this mission, we focus on outreach to encourage young people from under-represented backgrounds to consider a future career in the built environment. Our outreach programmes help students develop the skills and confidence to apply to university, and build greater representation of socio-economically disadvantaged students in elite universities. Through widening participation scholarships, skill-building programmes and summer schools, we work to open up new opportunities for students.

The data is clear: students that meet the widening participation criteria have the highest university drop-out rates, and those who do complete a degree achieve lower grades.

This is not because these students are less talented, but because they do not have the same foundation as students from grammar or private school backgrounds, or students whose parents may have attended university.

To tackle this issue, we've recently launched The Bartlett Promise scholarship, open to undergraduate, Master's and PhD students at The Bartlett. The Promise scheme is designed

to provide mentorship opportunities as well as financial support for students from under-represented backgrounds, and build a pipeline of future graduates to tackle the lack of diversity in the built environment professions.

We also launched our Design Unlimited programme in collaboration with MATT + FIONA, a London organisation working with young people to open up career paths in the built environment. The Design Unlimited programme works with non-selective state schools with a high intake of ethnic minority students and pupils on free school meals. We equip these students with design skills to study architecture at undergraduate level, and provide them with opportunities and knowledge of higher education and the built environment.

This programme works with state schools, teachers and communities to offer support to students, to help them discover what they enjoy in areas they may never have thought about, and encourage diversity and inclusion in higher education.

By targeting younger age groups, we ensure that students are equipped with the necessary skills long before they apply for university. We are currently working with a Year 7 group, for example, and so university is not really on their radar, but we think it is important to plant the seeds for the future.



Images: Ciaran McCrickard

We were impacted by the pandemic, but we made sure we found a way to give students the full experience of the programme. The first two sessions were pre-recorded and sent to participants, and the latest sessions were held via Zoom. We are now working towards the build project which will take place this summer and will be displayed in the school library.

With a desire to delve into the Here East community, we are looking to expand our presence through more partnerships, including with the People's Pavilion – a competition-based design project for young people in East London that provides collaborative opportunities with top designers. Our Bartlett

outreach ambassadors are current Bartlett students who work with young people and widening participation students, and these ambassadors will have a key role to play in our partnership with the People's Pavilion, working closely on the workshops and supporting the project.

At The Bartlett, we want a more diverse range of people to see studying with us as an option. In the past year, we have really been able to put our mission into practice and, despite the pandemic, we have had success, reaching a lot of young people. We aspire to develop our outreach activities further, to ensure UCL and The Bartlett is open to everyone.

By targeting younger age groups, we ensure that students are equipped with the necessary skills long before they apply for university. We are currently working with a Year 7 group, for example, and so university is not really on their radar, but we think it is important to plant the seeds for the future

We were impacted by the pandemic, but we made sure we found a way to give students the full experience of the programme



Staffordshire University London

Matt Brindley-Sadler, Director

While the pandemic was unexpected and disrupted our day-to-day as a university, it afforded us the opportunity to revisit our strategic plans and look ahead to the future. We have put together an expanded portfolio of courses that align to industry growth in key sectors.

This new offering includes a Cyber Security degree, which contributed to a significant increase in our student intake in September 2020. Despite the pandemic, more than 100 new undergraduates joined our campus. We were one of the first universities nationally to launch a virtual open day platform and our "Community Voices" series provided key advice to students about their career progression.

Barriers to higher education are oftentimes both perceived and real, and we are committed to widening access and participation opportunities. One key development is our contribution to the new Here East scholarship programme, which we wholly support, and we are excited for our first scholarship recipients to join their courses in September.

Campus collaboration has remained at the forefront of our agenda. While we have been unable to deliver physical events, we have continued to work closely with our neighbours, including Sports Interactive, BT Sport, Bidstack and Neurgears. We are also working on new exclusive educational partner opportunities with local businesses and organisations within the larger Stratford and Hackney areas.

All of this new activity leaves us in a strong position for further growth in the years to come. We are currently planning for the launch of three new subject areas from

2022 in Artificial Intelligence, Data Science & Informatics and Financial Technologies. We will also be launching a new suite of professional technology courses, starting with the FinTech course and to be followed later by programmes for Education, Human Resources and Insurance.

Sammy Engele, Head of Recruitment & Outreach

Alongside the evolution of our core curriculum, our community engagement work included our participation in the inaugural Yop Esports Championships event, run by local esports team LDN United, with the support of the Mayor of London and The Rio Ferdinand Foundation. The event combined a week-long series of workshops that highlighted career paths available in the sector, with a tournament at the end of the week.

We developed a masterclass series for each of our courses, giving young people a glimpse into the sector they are interested in and, as part of National Careers Week, we co-presented with Here East at East Careers Week, in a session aimed at helping local young people to choose the right career pathway for them. We also contributed to the LLDC and Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park Summer School, delivering three workshops to help local 12 to 17-year-olds develop invaluable skills for their future.

Perhaps most importantly, we engaged in strategic collaborations for our outreach work to help tap into new audiences and share resources to maximise impact for attendees. This involved partnerships both with well-known established companies such as Sports Interactive and smaller startups like local esports organisation LionsCreed.



We developed a masterclass series for each of our courses, giving young people a glimpse into the sector they are interested in

In our efforts to put students first, we joined forces with seven other universities based in East London to host an event called "Student Wellbeing & Success". This was aimed at parents and teachers, to ensure they were equipped to support the young people in their care preparing to enter higher education.

We believe that with all of these initiatives and collaborations, as well as the strong links we have formed with local schools and colleges we are creating a real alternative option for young people in the area, to enable them to study courses they are passionate about with great job prospects.

Ryan Chapman, Student Ambassador

Esports is a sector I have felt very passionate about for a long time, ever since I was introduced to early iterations of Counter-Strike. At around 13 to 14-years-old, I discovered the tournament and competitive sphere surrounding the game and was hooked.

Since then, I watched the event sector grow and decided that this was the sector I wanted to work in. I felt that being able to learn about the inner workings, while still getting a university experience at my age, was important. And so, the Staffordshire University London esports degree came at the perfect time for me.

The opportunity to study in East London, a hotspot for the technology and digital sector, was also incredibly exciting and seemed to fit my ambitions. The Here East campus is a fantastic location and, while it is a different university experience than studying somewhere with its own campus, being surrounded by other universities and businesses is really enjoyable.

Over the past year, the university has been incredibly supportive, offering bumper sessions for us to book and attend on-site when restrictions have allowed, and pivoting the course well when not.

Beyond my studies, I help the university as a communications ambassador. This involves the creation of video and digital content, often aimed at current or prospective students, sharing my thoughts on university life and offering advice on issues from organisation to maintaining positive mental health.

I would probably say that my biggest responsibility, though, is my role as captain of the campus' Counter-Strike: Global Offensive team! We just had our most successful campaign in varsity competition and I hope we can maintain this form for the next year. It feels like my gaming experience has come full circle from first enjoying those games as a teenager to captaining the team today.



Loughborough University London

Ben Cole, Head of Strategic Projects and Future Space

I was part of the original team that helped to set up Loughborough University London. We wanted to make sure we were creating a new, better, multi-disciplinary community in a place of great growth and opportunity.

For me personally, this vision and its location are so special. My children were born in Homerton Hospital, about half a mile from Here East, and I've always worked in education serving the communities around us here. Through this I've seen the incredible talent there is in our local boroughs. When that talent is connected to networks, education and opportunities incredible things can happen.

The London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games and its legacy was a real opportunity to build a fairer, more inclusive, East London. With Loughborough University London we wanted to ensure that, as much as possible, we created the opportunity for local and global talent to come here to learn and grow.

Our investment in scholarships has seen some amazing people do some amazing things. It is great for three of those people to be featured here in the Here East Impact Report.

Maria Tudor, Master's student and Monday Mentoring participant

One of the reasons I came to this campus was because of the business focused approach and career opportunities that it enables. Despite all the limitations of the past year, the entire team at the London campus have really gone out of their way to create opportunities for us to network and connect to those in the sectors we want to join.

When I first started the Master's, it was a really isolating time for me – as it was for so many – unable to see or speak to my friends as often, and not being able to meet with people in person owing to the pandemic. So, I joined the mentorship scheme to find a bit more guidance and advice as well as meet with other students and network with local industry professionals.

Our mentor was Sam Murphy from BT Sport, who helped us to set goals at the outset and offered constant support. It was real, in-depth mentoring and very different from a formal careers meeting.

I have always wanted to work in sport and from before I even began my Master's I had my sights set on securing a role in sports marketing. Sam and the rest of my mentor group fully supported me in chasing my ambitions, and offered me advice about how best to go about finding my dream job. He was also incredibly helpful, taking time outside of our usual mentorship sessions for me to practice my pitch presentation with him and offering really helpful feedback.



Sam and the rest of my mentor group fully supported me in chasing my ambitions, and offered me advice about how best to go about finding my dream job

Vanessa Brown, Inspiring Success awardee and prospective PhD student

I joined Loughborough University London in 2019 as a Master's student, after seeing they offered a degree in entrepreneurship and innovation management. The campus and its programmes had only launched in 2015 and so it was really up to date, relevant and would give me great practical experience and a theoretical underpinning for my own entrepreneurial ambitions.

I had my own business at the time and I wasn't sure how I would be able to afford the degree. After searching for funding options, I found the Inspiring Success scholarship, which supported me through the application process.

It's really important to have these opportunities available in the local community, especially in an East London context, because if you look at the average income of people in Hackney and the surrounding boroughs, there remain high levels of deprivation. And so, I think it is crucial to be able to provide opportunities for people to upskill themselves.

Through the degree I gained many skills, particularly around business strategy. But the biggest impact this Inspiring Success had was solidifying my ambition to take up a PhD, which I will start in September.

Statistics show in times of crisis, like we are in now, businesses owned by black people are disproportionately likely to face economic difficulties. My PhD will look at businesses that are not in decline: those that are surviving or even growing in this time, what key characteristics these organisations have and how, even with odds stacked against them, they are managing to thrive.

Loughborough University London continues to offer scholarship programmes to inspire high-achieving students from all backgrounds to benefit from outstanding teaching and cutting-edge research facilities. For more information, please visit the Loughborough University website.

Benjamin Ndubuisi, Entrepreneur and Dean's Award for Enterprise alumnus

I was raised in Nigeria and, following my first degree, I went into entrepreneurship – starting an "aquaculture" (fish agriculture) business. Although we raised some early-stage funds and I felt we had potential, I was encouraged to further my studies.

This happened to be in 2015, the year that the Loughborough University London campus had opened. By sheer grace, I found out about a 90% scholarship called the Dean's Award for Enterprise. This gave me an opportunity to focus on my entrepreneurship and innovation management studies, without having to work simultaneously.

While I perhaps had raw entrepreneurial talent and ambition, I had a knowledge gap. Through the degree I was able to consolidate what I thought I knew, correct what I did not know, and learn new skills. But what I found most important was that the university itself was entrepreneurial in its approach. The innovative culture made me think, "I can do this".

After graduating, I founded VING.AI – a secure currency exchange platform for Africans living in the UK. Since launching, we have been recognised with Innovate UK's Young Innovators Awards – a fantastic honour that gives me the opportunity to build on my idea further.

People have ideas, dreams. And the fact that there is a university who will create an opportunity and enable young people to, at the very least, explore these, is a way of democratising success. It allows people access to skills and knowledge that they could perhaps not have gained otherwise.

Powering the creative industries

Here East is a home for makers. Read about Studio Wayne McGregor's pandemic pivot and LMA's new home on the campus, as both look to create a pipeline to the creative industries



A network of creatives

Jasmine Wilson, Director of Learning and Engagement, Studio Wayne McGregor, Jordan Bridge and Eileih Muir, Dancers, Studio Wayne McGregor

Studio Wayne McGregor opened a world class creative arts space at Here East in 2017, comprised of three dance studios. The studio is a nexus of partners who explore movement and artistry through a collaborative network of dancers, writers, composers, visual artists and more.

Being a part of the creative innovation hub at Here East has enabled Studio Wayne McGregor to collaborate with partners across the campus. Jasmine Wilson, its Director of Learning and Engagement, explains: "In February last year we delivered a youth dance leadership programme – in partnership with Badu Sports – to train up young women and inspire them. We are also close with UCL's innovation and enterprise department, and some of our associate artists are working with its academics."

Studio Wayne McGregor has also developed an unparalleled reputation for transformative approaches to dance teaching.

The studio's learning and engagement projects have provided high-quality lessons to over 100,000 people of all ages and backgrounds, with innovative content designed to maximise the self-expression and creativity of participants.

The pandemic posed significant challenges for the creative industries, with the closure of theatres and studios, and the cancellation of tours. In response to this, Studio Wayne McGregor launched RESET – a professional development programme for dancers – in August 2020, with Here East providing a space for the programme as in-kind support.

Jordan Bridge, a dancer at Studio Wayne McGregor, explains: "We offered free training to freelance dancers who are desperately in need of something, because the work is scarce at the moment," he says. "Included in the programme are classes for a morning group and an afternoon group, with evening workshops and talks."

Topics for these workshops include managing finances, fundraising, psychology, mental health, cooking and nutrition. The focus at Studio Wayne McGregor is to create a community bound by a shared love of the creative arts: "This was all a way of bringing a community together who were really suffering and just giving them a support network, as well as practical training," says Jasmine.

Dancer Eileih Muir reflects on the past year and is appreciative that she has had the time to explore her own creative ideas. For her, the prospect of returning offers a sense of refreshment and rejuvenation: "It is exciting that the industry is starting to open up again. Because we have had this time off, we could research and develop ideas of our own, and put some time into our own creative voice. It will be fantastic to put these ideas into practice."



Being a part of the creative innovation hub at Here East has enabled Studio Wayne McGregor to collaborate with many partners across the campus

The world's your stage, so get creative

Richard Wallace, Co-founder, LMA, Jenni Tyler-Maher, Principal, LMA London, Graham Sarath, National Commercial and Partnerships Director, LMA

LMA, the institute for creative media and performing arts, branched out from its Liverpool foundations and joined the Here East campus in 2020. With Here East known as a hub for creative innovation, there was no better place for LMA to broaden its horizons.

Co-founder Richard Wallace explains: "LMA has always had growth plans to open a campus in the capital and, as soon as we visited Here East, it just felt right. The whole area is a hotbed of creatively minded people and organisations, which we wanted to be part of."

Just under 70% of LMA's students are the first in their family to attend higher education. Working alongside Hackney Council on the Kickstart Scheme, LMA will be recruiting 10 apprentices across various areas of the campus in a move to support graduates in the creative sectors from the local area.

LMA has also partnered with Here East on its scholarship programme, to offer a fully paid scholarship to three local young people each year.

Jenni Tyler-Maher, Principal of LMA London, outlines the importance of engagement with local networks: "We have developed links with local performing arts institutions such as Artistry Youth Dance and X7. We hope to collaborate with both of these companies, whether it is through workshops that are led by our industry

professional tutors or visits to our site to open students' eyes to the potential of a career in creative media and performing arts."

Building and opening a brand-new state-of-the-art campus during the height of the pandemic was always going to be a challenge, but LMA adapted in its teaching and engagement. Graham Sarath, LMA's National Commercial and Partnerships Director explains: "We were always committed to continue teaching face-to-face on campus as much as possible, in a safe and controlled fashion. When restrictions forced us to go remote we continued with a full timetable online. Tutors delivered mostly from our studios and it was amazing to see the students adapt and take it in their stride – having acting, dance, music lessons and more in their kitchens, lounges or bedrooms!"

LMA is passionate about students from all departments working together and the increase in online communications actually accelerated the integration and relationships between the Liverpool and London campuses for both students and staff.

And despite challenges to the creative industries, Richard says the future remains bright: "To future students worried about opportunities in the creative sector, the pandemic has highlighted that there has never been a stronger thirst for high-quality, creative content. From sheer volume of demand for streaming services, to innovative live online music performances and events, the appetite for consuming content is great.

Of young people, by young people, for young people

The People's Pavilion, Beyond the Box

Neil Onions, Founder & CEO, Beyond The Box Consultants

Neil believes in co-designing with young people, to build more equitable spaces: "Youth clubs are not fit for purpose and are rapidly closing. They would be more successful if young people had agency in designing them."

Here East offered Neil the opportunity to build a temporary creative space for young people on the campus, the People's Pavilion: "As a Hackney resident, I knew that Here East would be the perfect fit, particularly considering the redevelopments happening on East Bank. It felt right to be a part of that."

As he prepares for launch this summer, Neil reflects on the project's ambitions: "We want institutions to look at how they approach co-design. At the moment, they create something and invite young people to take part without their input. We want to flip the script on that."

Bareera Borhan, Volunteer

Architecture graduate Bareera is one young person involved in the People's Pavilion, helping to shape a workshop programme in collaboration with Urban Symbiotics and Here East.

"I'm keen on incorporating aspects of my degree into the programming, so that it mirrors the process of a designer," Bareera explains. "I know I'd have benefitted from a programme like this when I was in my teens."

She adds that projects like the People's Pavilion have a role to play in connecting

young people with urban spaces: "Co-design makes architectural design more accessible. The People's Pavilion is a great connector with large-scale developments like Here East, which can feel intimidating. It will enable young people to make a mark on the urban fabric and reclaim that space."

Muhsin Mahmud, Deputy Young Mayor, Tower Hamlets & Content Creator

Muhsin is involved in curating content for the People's Pavilion, gathering insights from young people in neighbouring boroughs: "There are young people in the area who want to get involved in extracurricular activities. But for programmes to be successful, they have to be built for them."

He launched a podcast, looking at social expectations placed upon young Asian people that prevent them from taking part in creative fields: "This can be a space for young people from ethnic minority backgrounds to get involved and see representation in front of them."

He adds that Here East is in a unique position to foster creative ventures like this: "There's nothing like this that existed before young people in East London. I hope this shows the true demand for spaces for young people."



The People's Pavilion is a great connector with large-scale developments like Here East, which can feel intimidating

Fostering the next generation of broadcasters

Jamie Hindhaugh, Chief Operating Officer, BT Sport

Ever since BT Sport set up operations at Here East, we have committed to the local community. It was something we pledged to do in our lease, believing it was important that everyone who worked for or with us was not just passing through the community, but was an integral part of it.

BT Sport Takeover is our community outreach programme working with NewVic Sixth Form college in Newham. This is an eight-week film-making course, with 12 students entering our second cohort, in 2020 – with the ultimate output of a 30-minute programme broadcast live on BT Sport, created, written and produced by them.

Takeover is about passing on skills to passionate young people. For the students, their participation goes towards their final marks in their college media studies, and allows them to build a network and gain tangible skills that could create opportunities for them to enter the television industry in the future.

COVID-19 restrictions certainly made running the programme more of a challenge – even our own staff were not allowed into the studio unless fully necessary to ensure safety was not compromised. But we were aware that many of these students did not have the right broadband speed or kit at home. And so, we worked with Plexal, using its space to ensure they had a place on campus to come and access the studio facilities when required.

Alongside Takeover, we work with School 21 in Stratford on a business-skills-focused programme, which engages young children over the course of the academic year to learn project management and commercial skills. This includes a practical project that asks them how they would run BT Sport.

BT Sport is also a headline sponsor for Rise Up, a wider initiative with fellow broadcasters that involves working with children choosing their GCSEs. Volunteers from each broadcaster go into the schools with all the kit they need to build their own TV studio and make a programme over the course of a day.

Even closer to home, we want to work with our partners on the Here East campus to support the community here and find opportunities to collaborate. We have worked closely with Loughborough University London, supporting its Monday Mentoring programme and with one of its students currently taking part in an internal communications placement.

Beyond this, we continue to look at how we can work more closely with the likes of UCL and Badu Sports, while of course continuing to support Plexal and Here East themselves as they roll-out their own community programmes.

Making impact through sport

With very different approaches, Badu Sports and FiiT are keeping bodies and minds healthy, and making an impact



"This should be the legacy that everyone talks about"

Nana Badu, Founder and Joshua Warburton, Chief Operating Officer, Badu Sports

A social enterprise dedicated to supporting and facilitating children to broaden their experiences and advance their opportunities, Badu Sports uses physical activity as its initial tool of engagement, but its offering stretches much further.

In its 10-year history, founder Nana Badu and his team have provided any and all support its community needs. The challenges of a lack of funding and people power have never stood in its way: "We are blessed to have a team who understand that we work in a way that stretches everyone to their limits," says Nana. "Many in our community literally rely on us and so, if something is needed, we never say no."

This challenge has never been more evident than during the past year. From the beginning of the pandemic, Nana recognised that Badu's community would be among the hardest hit and so, without even thinking about his own organisation's survival, his team got to work. "Here East offered us a unit so that we could provide food delivery support for the local area. This ended up stretching to Tower Hamlets, Islington and even Westminster.

"We didn't once think about ourselves, only about our community. And it was only when one of our corporate partners asked us how we were doing in terms of our own survival that we realised the pandemic was impacting us, too."

Badu Sports' primary funding channels come through its work with schools and, with these closed, its entire business model was impacted: "While we took up the furlough scheme to ensure we didn't lose core team members, it was a challenging time with no surplus of funds to keep us afloat."

Ultimately, the company was able to pivot remotely, so that it could continue to work with the most vulnerable children still in schools. Chief Operating Officer Joshua Warburton says this required them to get tech savvy. But, even with Zoom sessions running, there was a further challenge in preventing many in the community from slipping through the cracks while face-to-face activity was off the cards.

In response, Badu set up a range of services, including a helpline for parents, as well as an online chat function for its young people. For those without access to a computer, a laptop loaning scheme was implemented to ensure anyone could contact Badu Sports when they needed to. Plexal also provided a quiet study space for those whose home environment was not conducive to remote learning.

Mental health support was also increased, with regular check-in calls from coaches, weekly mentoring groups and peer-to-peer support with volunteers from the community: "We run a therapy service and there are four or five young people going through this at the



Here East offered us a unit so that we could provide food delivery support for the local area

moment because they were signposted to it by their own peers, who could see they were struggling and let them know we offered this," says Joshua.

"We were never quiet throughout the pandemic because we lead by example and we were not going to let anyone feel isolated."

While direct support in the pandemic has been the urgent action of the past year, there are longer-term ambitions – firstly, to build bridges from Here East and the businesses based there to the local community.

One way in which this is done is through Here East's sponsorship of Badu Sports' football teams. This provides a dual benefit, Joshua explains: "When kids go into school in their training kit, or when they're playing in front of families and other teams, people ask about the Here East sponsorship –making us a walking billboard. We can then vouch for Here East and how amazing all of the people here are."

Nana adds: "The sponsorship means that we don't need to charge kids for their kit. It's already paid for. Some of our parents live in poverty, but that doesn't mean their children don't have the right to belong. There should be no financial circumstance that will restrict them from participating."

The ultimate ambition for Badu Sports is to give its community aspirations and

channel them into successful roles. Two examples are Aaron Hesse-Owusu and Abdullah Patel, who came through Badu Sports and have gone on to Sports Interactive's trainee scheme.

"When the 2012 Games was announced I was worried a certain group of people would miss out. That they wouldn't be invited to the party," says Nana. "Here East addresses that by giving organisations like ours a platform to get local people into jobs and our mentoring programme is built specifically to do that.

"Our message is dream big. For our kids to say that they work for Sports Interactive or BT Sports. To say that they got out, so their peers see they can have a different outcome too.

"This should be the legacy of the Olympic Park. This should be the legacy of Here East. This should be the legacy that everyone talks about. That young people who grew up here were mentored in this space and now work for organisations right here."



FiiT: Home workouts, global expansion and local impact

Ben Wharfe, Chief People Officer, FiiT

In what has been an incredibly challenging year for people's mental and physical health, the ambition for FiiT as a digital fitness experience was to provide that outlet for people who wanted to keep fit and stay motivated. Our business model put us in a strong position for growth with everyone at home, but the most important thing has been helping people to stay healthy physically and mentally.

We have been able to expand our customer base and found new channels for growth. This materialised in the form of partnerships with companies like Sky, Amazon and Samsung, as well as an increase in corporate customers, who have been buying FiiT for their employees as a corporate wellness benefit.

Although we know many people have struggled with the pressures and impact of lockdown, others have felt more productive from cutting out the stresses associated with going into work. The impact of this is that 40% of people reported that they exercised more in 2020 than they had previously. Home workouts were already on the rise prior to the pandemic, with examples such as FiiT and Peloton, as well as fitness wearables.

We expected that home fitness would ultimately become the predominant way for people to work out. But the pandemic has massively accelerated this trend by five years.

It also looks like this acceleration will be a lasting one, with over a third of people saying that they will not be returning to the gym.

In the immediate wake of the first lockdown, our employee engagement massively shot up, which we attributed to the novelty of working from home and people not having their daily commutes. This engagement has remained at higher levels than prior to the pandemic and, more than a year since that first lockdown, we continue to grow. As a result, we are exploring expansion, having almost doubled our staff numbers from 42 to 82 employees in the last year.

The pandemic has undoubtedly created new opportunities for us. Our growth targets are more aggressive, the corporate wellbeing space is now also a big focus for us, as well as continuing to expand onto a variety of different TV platforms and internationally.



We will also be looking to launch and make significant headway in the US in the second half of the year, which will be followed by looking at how we best drive interaction through a number of different fitness offerings. As the world re-opens we have plenty of exciting things in the pipeline, including new partnerships with gyms and fitness studios.

Our focus is also local, as well as global. We want to be right at the forefront of the agenda when it comes to diversity, inclusion and anti-racism in the Hackney area, and have put a large focus on educating the company internally to make sure we are doing this. Unfortunately, what we know from the data is that people from ethnic minorities and underprivileged backgrounds have been disproportionately impacted by both the health and socio-economic effects of COVID-19, so there is definitely a role for us to play when it comes to providing opportunities for people from these backgrounds.

We have been based at Here East for over three years now. And while the pandemic has posed challenges when

it comes to interacting and engaging with the wider ecosystem on campus, we have felt very well supported.

Having our base here also allows us to interact with the wider East London community. We have a partnership with Hackney Council, where we advise people on how to access careers in tech. We are also working with the council's Kickstarter campaign to provide opportunities for young people from the local area, who may be from disadvantaged backgrounds that could limit them from finding these opportunities. COVID permitting, we are also set to run workshops for school children, where they come onto campus and learn about what we do here.

As a company it is vital to do this kind of community outreach, and engage with children and adults who might not be traditional FiiT customers. Our mission is to make exercise a habit for everybody and we believe that we can be the driving engine behind this. We are breaking down barriers to fitness that exist in traditional approaches, making it accessible and affordable for all.

We have been able to expand our customer base and found new channels for growth



Our retailers

It has been a challenging year for everyone, but perhaps none more so than our retailers, who have found their business models completely disrupted



A café with a conscience

Charlie Hill, Co-creator, MOTHER



What's the story behind MOTHER and why did you set up the business?

We created MOTHER to provide a space that feels good for people – the workers, the community and our customers. For us this started with making great food, with the best organic ingredients at an affordable price.

Our vision is to help everyone to live happy and healthy lives, in harmony with our planet. We believe in the impact of food on our minds and bodies, and its role in helping us to transition to a more caring society. But this mission doesn't come without its challenges. And so, we are here to make that easier by shining a spotlight on the importance of good local produce – for our health and that of the planet.

Why do you believe it is important to operate with a social conscience?

If you are solely looking for a bottom-line profit, it is likely you will compromise on your offering

and products to meet the demands of growing a business. While we understand the importance of making money, we also understand the long-term importance of creating an environment that feels good.

When you have these as driving factors, you begin to look much more closely at the impact you have on the people, the places and the products you serve.

This has been an incredibly challenging year for retail and hospitality. What challenges have you faced?

We have had to constantly adapt our offering to meet the latest government guidance – moving to a takeaway model during lockdown periods and training our staff to do table service when restrictions have allowed.

Perhaps the biggest challenge has been keeping ourselves and our team motivated in an environment where at times it has felt difficult to be happy and positive, which we know is a vital part of life, our wellbeing and business.

Staying open and providing great coffee and cakes has been received very well by our local community as they visit us on their daily exercise route. This interaction for some people has been the only time they see others in the day, so we try to speak with our customers as much as possible to show that we are here for them. A simple smile goes a long way.

How has Here East supported you over the past year?

Over the last 12 months we have had a huge amount of support from Here East, who have helped us to secure permits so that we can have extra seating on the grass in front of the café, increasing our outdoor offering.

During the periods that we have been unable to offer outdoor seating, they have allowed us access to a storage container that enabled us to keep our café clear, which was vital to our day-to-day operations.

Their continued support with rent reductions and regular meetings to ensure that we can meet our needs has been welcome to us as an independent family business, and has been invaluable to us staying open and feeding our community.

How have you continued to support the local community?

We decided early on as a team that we wanted to provide good, nutritious food to people during this challenging time – providing juice, cakes and sausage rolls to the three local hospitals.

We have also run initiatives with local community food kitchen Made in Hackney, providing plant-based meals to vulnerable members of our community. We have donated revenue from certain menu items and have offered our customers the opportunity to “pay it forward”, so they can buy a meal for a person or a family through Made in Hackney.

Last year we also raised awareness and money each month for local charities doing amazing work. We ran a coffee morning and raffle for the Women's Environmental Network, and bake sales for the likes of Runnymede Trust and Gendered Intelligence.

This year we are supporting different great causes each quarter, including Sistah Space, who support African & Caribbean heritage women and girls affected by domestic and sexual abuse.

What are your plans for the year ahead as we move into recovery?

Over the past year, we have worked on our organisational structure to ensure we can continue with our great work post-pandemic. We created the MOTHER Hive, so we now have teams dedicated to all key areas of the business. Each team is empowered to make decisions to reach their targets and make a positive impact.

These permanent teams include those making the best innovative plant-based food, another tracking our local impact and a content team to make sure we are shouting about all the great things that are happening around us.

Before the pandemic, it was a case of working on areas outside our usual café operations only when we had time and resources available. Now we have made sure that these teams are as important as anything we do. This makes us very proud.



Overcoming pandemic challenges by never staying still

Andrew Watts, Randy's Wing Bar

You can imagine how challenging it was as a hospitality business, when the first lockdown was announced. It was a scary time and hard to digest, with so much uncertainty around how long that lockdown would last, or whether we could even keep our business alive throughout this period. But our first priority was always to look into what steps we had to take to make sure we kept our staff safe.

One thing we did know was that we had to kick into action and start looking at ways we could pivot the business, deciding that ecommerce was the best option for us. And so we started to draw up plans of how we could implement this.

We felt it was important that we did not stay still, and tried to think outside the box – considering the risks we needed to take in order to innovate in ways that would help the business, not only in the short-term but in the long-term as well. With this in mind, we followed other businesses and launched our cook-at-home kits during the first lockdown and, in order to keep us alive at the restaurant, we ran a very slick team doing takeaways.

We feel very fortunate that Here East has been our landlord throughout the pandemic. The team here has been with us since the very beginning of our journey and have always

been incredibly supportive, halting our rent for a period of time, which – after losing half our revenue overnight – was so important.

They have also been instrumental in approaching the council on our behalf to extend the outdoor seating area to ensure maximum business for us as restrictions lift, as well as generally keeping us updated with government advice.

When we joined Here East over five years ago, we were one of the first traders to move in. It was a very big risk for two young guys to open a restaurant in this relatively new space and, although it was a very slow start for us, as time has gone on it has become a real local hotspot, with more locals and the younger generation coming in.

It has been really interesting to see the development of the site throughout this time, how Hackney has changed as a result, and how the relationship between the campus and community has evolved. We feel very blessed to have it on our doorstep.

But, while our own survival has been at the forefront of our thinking, being a part of Here East means that we have to do our bit for the community as well. After being in Hackney Wick for nearly six years, as soon as we heard



Our first priority was always to look into what steps we had to take to make sure we kept our staff safe

about the school meals crisis, we felt that we needed to get on board and help to provide free school meals.

The response was amazing and subsequently we are looking to extend our support after lockdown by working with charities to fund this kind of service moving forward. It was great to see that small changes can actually make a big difference.

For the last two years we have also sponsored Boston Celtics, a local Sunday league football team based in Hackney. They do a lot of fundraising for Blood Cancer UK, which we have helped with by organising some really successful charity events at the restaurant, raising more than £2,000.

As a business we have found it an absolute privilege to give back in this small way and to be able to work with such a great group of people. The team is such an instrumental part of the community in Hackney, and what we've taken away from the partnership with them is the conviction that, if all businesses had these kinds of relationships with their communities, the world would be a much better place.

Despite how busy the last year has been, we need to think a few steps ahead as we approach the end of lockdown and be as reactive as possible. We are currently working on plans to flip the second restaurant we own,

which has been closed since March, to a new shellfish pop-up called Claw & Hammer. We also have plans to open an oyster cart outside of Hackney and we are developing a range of sauces and rubs that we will be selling online.

This will all be alongside more charitable work, including a further collaboration with Boston Celtics, where we will be donating one pound from every cook-at-home kit we sell over the next three months to their chosen charity. We will also run a similar initiative with a local children's charity.

One thing that I have learnt from this year is that the local community is really powerful when we get together and collaborate. I think that a lot of business models are now looking to become more involved with the communities that they are surrounded by and, in doing so, they will feel the benefit. It is so important that businesses give a little back, even if it is only a small amount. It all makes a difference in the end.



Looking ahead

After a turbulent year in which our tenants and community have shown extraordinary resilience, here's hoping for a brighter future



Here for whatever 2021 throws at us

Mike Magan, Chief Operating Officer, Here East



We emblazoned these words across our theatre as we entered the new year, after rallying in what was undoubtedly the most challenging year our community and many of our tenants have faced since opening our doors.

Even in January, when it felt like there was no end in sight to this pandemic, we felt confident that we could remain resilient. That we could overcome whatever this year threw at us.

And, as I write, we may not be fully out of the woods but the overwhelming feeling is that brighter days are coming. Debates about what the future holds, about how the economy recovers and what the “new normal” looks like will continue. While they do, our people – from the incredible universities, to the innovative startups, to the inspiring East London community – will continue to shape that future.

What we knew before, but have come to understand to an even greater extent over the last year or more, is that community is central to our way of life. People want and crave interaction and, while so much of this year has been spent physically separated, we have found everyone in and around our campus to be more engaged than ever.

We demonstrated that we are here for East London and, from speaking to our tenants and people in the local boroughs, this year has been a chance for more of our neighbours to discover Here East. To realise this is not

just a home for businesses, but a destination. Our campus is an accessible space, open to all, and we now see so many people coming down here for a walk, a coffee or to meet friends in a socially distanced setting.

This has been a massive help to our retailers on Canalside, which have remained open even when unable to welcome customers through their doors.

We have continued to let space to interesting organisations old and new. Businesses have faced such hardship and we have done whatever we can to support them through this. And in the face of adversity, many have found new ways to innovate, adapt and ultimately grow.

Sports Interactive, for example, has doubled in size and has taken up a new, larger space on our campus to reflect its growth. Of course, this is incredibly exciting for both Here East and Sports Interactive, but most importantly, it is a positive investment in talent as well as space. It is a move that will benefit the local community and young people, especially through job creation, as demonstrated by the trainee scheme you can read about in this report.

This year has also marked a milestone for Here East and Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, positioning ourselves and taking steps to become the country’s leading esports cluster,

driving further job creation and bringing a \$180 billion global industry to East London.

Our Esports Feasibility Report, published in March, laid out our vision and roadmap – identifying the unique characteristics that make the Olympic Park the natural home for esports in the UK: from state-of-the-art sporting venues, to proximity to esports teams and close engagement with academic institutions like Staffordshire University London, which specialises in esports.

It is a message to the world that says London has the talent, venues and expertise to become a global capital for esports.

In September, we will continue delivering against this promise with Stack Fest, an inaugural event taking place at Here East, which will feature well-known esports and games brands, leading professional teams and players, higher education agents, and the fan community, all coming together for a unique three-day epic gathering.

Stack Fest will be a truly unique and exciting event, demonstrating the value of esports

as an industry of the future and the Olympic Park as London’s home for that industry. We also hope it will be an opportunity in a post-pandemic-restrictions world to bring people together and have stakeholders from across the industry meet face-to-face.

Looking to the industries of the future has been at the heart of Here East since our launch, and our new podcast, Listen Here, does exactly that. Through topics such as the Future of Sport with football legend and BT Sport pundit Rio Ferdinand, the Future of Work with Global Strategic Propositions Leader at Dell Technologies Margarete McGrath, and the Future of Dance with Wayne McGregor CBE, we are finding our creative voice, speaking to our community and addressing issues big, small and different.

We truly believe that different makes the difference. That is the guiding principle that inspires us and it will continue to do so for years to come. It is too early to say what the future will bring, but Here East and our community will be at the heart of shaping it – like we always have done – with a difference.

Sports Interactive, for example, has doubled in size and will be taking up a new, larger space on our campus to reflect its growth



Here East would like to thank all of our community partners and tenants. It has been a challenging year for the campus and we could not have done it without you.

Photography credits and thanks to Ciaran McCrickard, Ollie Hammick, Albert Palen and Gary Morrisroe.