

Empowering People, Strengthening Communities

Collective Action and the Voluntary, Community and
Social Enterprise Sector

2023 - 2027

Introduction

The strengths of our community have been visible to all in recent times - during the pandemic many residents met their neighbours for the first time, and many joined community responses to take care of those in need around them. This emergence of a greater community in Kingston ignited a conversation about how we take care of each other, and what it means to belong in Kingston and to participate in our communities.

Kingston has a truly vibrant voluntary, community and social enterprise sector (VCSE) who are key to navigating these extraordinary challenges that we face. These organisations and individuals work alongside and support communities, changing their services and developing new approaches to meet needs. Having worked together throughout the pandemic, these organisations are now striving to provide assistance to residents struggling with the cost of living crisis.

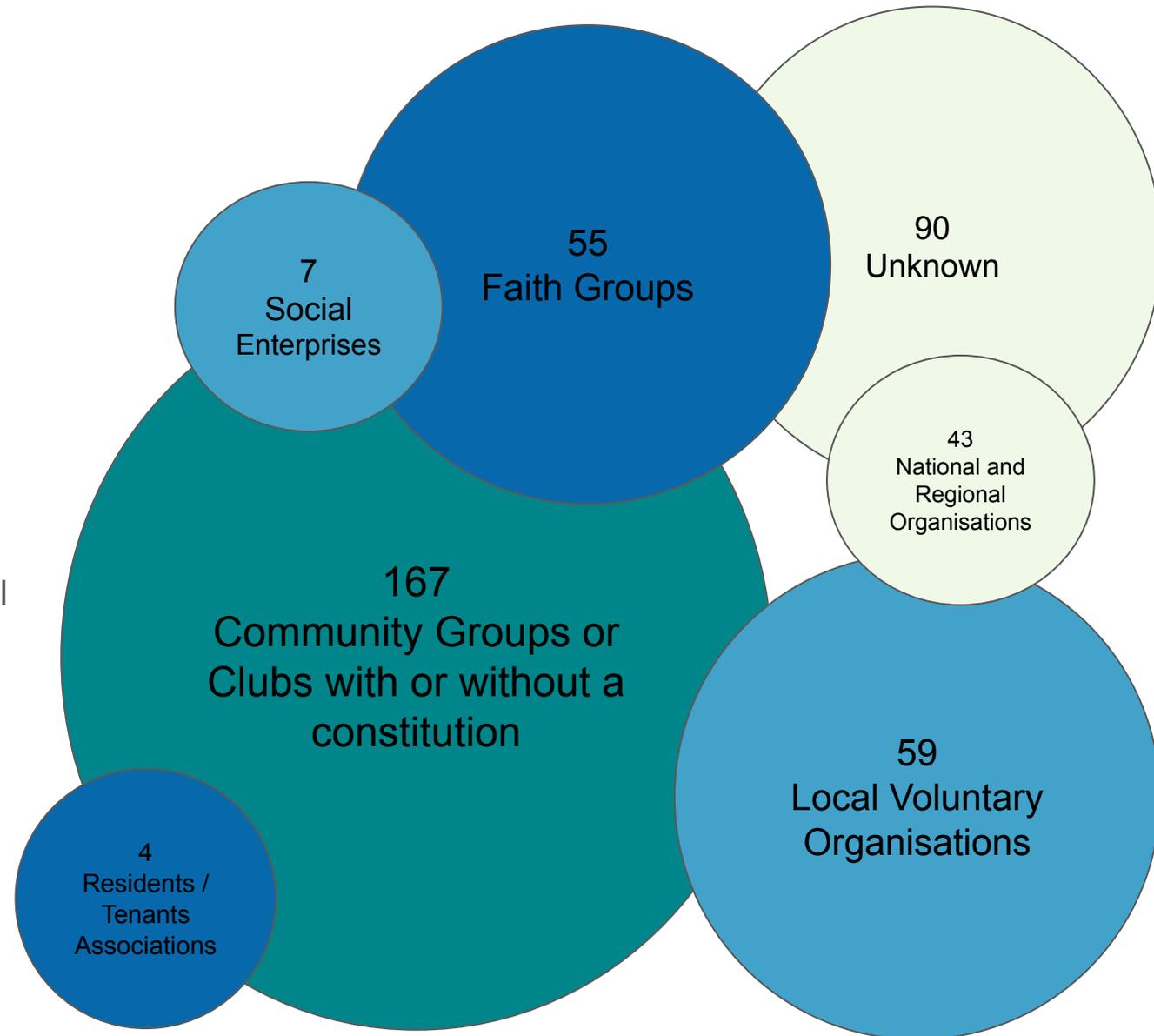
It is apparent in Kingston that we work together not just to respond to extreme circumstances but also to create fairness and equity, celebrate diversity, build inclusion and share opportunity. This strategy is the result of ongoing conversations about how we all work together to support and empower each other. We know we are stronger together and we are committed to continue building on this.

Over the life of this strategy we will prioritise and strengthen our relationships and find new ways of working together, striving to maintain the high quality of our local services. At this time of great challenge there is also opportunity - to develop partnerships and work together to find new ways of supporting our residents to thrive.

About the Kingston Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Sector

Kingston is built from neighbourhoods and groups, through friendships and faiths, through schools and special interests. Data that we collect demonstrates the diversity of the organisations working in Kingston and supporting our communities and residents.

This strategy focuses on delivering the aspirations of these formal and informal groups, putting in place the conditions for new organisations and groups to emerge and grow, and for all communities to thrive.



About the Strengthening Communities partnership

In 2019, prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, the council and the VCSE worked together to prepare for this strategy by holding a series of workshops to define our route forward. A total of 75 groups were in contact with the council through this process, which led to the identification of these themes to guide our future work:

An equal partnership

Transparency

Strong collaboration

In Winter 2021, as we began to rebuild after the pandemic, the council and our voluntary and community sector partners came together again, to review these findings and to begin to shape the post-pandemic future of working together. This group met 8 times in 2022, and attended a series of design workshops and focus groups to fully explore what the strengthening communities approach should aspire to be.

A strong working relationship with the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector is critical not just for the council but also for [the Kingston Partnership](#), which is the overarching strategic partnership in Kingston. The Kingston Partnership Board has overseen the development of this strategy and has pledged to support the commitments within it.

By working together and focusing on the aspirations of Kingston communities, the Strengthening Communities partnership has developed a set of ambitious and future focused objectives for the life of this strategy and will work together to achieve them.

Our residents' voice

In 2022, people across Kingston took part in a large consultation define three ambitions for the future of Kingston's communities.

These ambitions were then tested with more than 900 residents and visitors to the borough. They are:

- **Thriving** Kingston is a place where no one should be left behind and all are able to lead the life they choose, respecting the duties they owe to each other including future generations
- **Participating** Kingston is a place where every person can make a real contribution to shaping the future, and is encouraged and supported to do so. This is how we will shape the future for Kingston and, by doing so together, strengthen the communities we are a part of
- **Belonging** Kingston is a place where all who live, work and study here can feel they belong: clear in its identity; proud of its heritage; embracing of its differences; rich in its communities; and focused on creating a brighter future for all

This ambition is woven through the Empowering People, Strengthening Communities strategy.

Our vision

The Strengthening
Communities' Partnership has
come together to agree a vision
for the Kingston's future

*Kingston is a welcoming
and inclusive borough
where inequity has no
place*

Tackling inequity together

In 2021 Kingston adopted the Marmot Principles. These principles talk about the wider factors that impact on health and wellbeing, and explain how considering and responding to these inequalities will make Kingston a more equitable, inclusive and fair place to live.

The Marmot Principles are:

- giving every child the best start in life
- enabling all people to maximise their capabilities and have control over their lives
- ensuring a healthy standard of living for all
- creating fair employment and good work for all
- creating and developing healthy and sustainable places and communities
- strengthening the role and impact of ill-health prevention

The Kingston Partnerships Board and the Strengthening Communities Partnership are committed to addressing these influences on health and wellbeing. For the life of this strategy we will work together to make Kingston a place where everyone has the chance to make the most of opportunity.

Our shared objectives

We will work together to:

- Maintain the strength of the partnership ready for new challenges
- Identify need using data, evidence and community voices
- Transform and adapt to meet emerging need and respond to inequality
- Build on the diverse strengths of communities
- Actively promote equality, diversity and inclusion and reject discrimination



Maintain the strength of the partnership ready for new challenges



We will work together to:

- Develop equitable relationships between the voluntary, community and social enterprise sectors and the council, hearing the full range of voices with different needs, skills and experiences
- Be open about challenges and opportunities and tackle them together
- Understand, acknowledge and maximise the resources of our partnership, and collaborate to bring additional resources to the borough
- Nurture emerging and established organisations to build resilience

Identify need using data, evidence and community voices



We will work together to:

- Use all of our networks and partnerships to engage and co-produce with residents and stakeholders
- Improve the evidence we hold and share insight widely. Collectively shape intelligence-led approaches to community need
- Understand our collective impact and identify emerging trends and gaps, through engaging across the Kingston Partnership*
- Understand who we are not talking with through our networks, and overcome the barriers to reach them

*more information about [the Kingston Partnership](#)

Transform and adapt to meet emerging need and respond to inequality



We will work together to:

- Identify areas of shared need and target resource (towards those who need it most)
- Focus on where we can make a difference
- Target prevention and resources where it can have the most impact

Build on the diverse strengths of communities



We will work together to:

- Share skills, experience and joy through volunteering and community connections
- Support local businesses and other stakeholders to actively contribute
- Develop how we use and share space, making resources more accessible to communities across the borough
- Celebrate Kingston and champion our achievements



Actively promote equality, diversity and inclusion and reject discrimination



We will stand together to:

- Value and champion diversity, celebrating all our communities, both established and new
- Understand inequality, and work to be the most inclusive borough
- Embrace our role in actively rejecting discrimination

Planning and shaping what we do - together

The Strengthening Communities partnership will work together to be responsible for achieving the objectives of this strategy and will:

- Develop and be accountable for a delivery plan to accompany this strategy
- Work to ensure that a variety of voices are heard - and be responsible for bringing community voices forward
- Consider all emerging opportunities to deliver together driving cohesion, outcomes for residents and equity for all

The Partnership will grow and develop, empowering people and strengthening communities together.

Appendix A

Needs Assessment

The Strengthening Communities partnership will work together over the life of this strategy to [Identify need using data, evidence and community voices](#). We will work together to continually bring together the best evidence and share this widely.

This appendix highlights key insight of borough need, which will be built upon by the partnership over the coming years.

Population and demographics

Kingston has 168,063 residents, an increase from 160,00 at the last census¹

Between 2011 and 2021, Kingston's household numbers increased from 63,639 to 65,626, which equated to a 3.1% rise¹

The percentage of all aged 66 years and over households is greater in Kingston (6.5%, 4,274) than for London as a whole (4.3%)¹

34% of residents were not born in the UK¹

10.5% of householders are living alone and over the age of 66¹

5.7% of householders are lone parent with dependent children - in Norbiton it is 9.1% (375 families)¹

The top three languages in the borough are English, Tamil and Korean Over 75% of RBK households record that all adults in the household speak English as a main language. Less than 10% of households have no one that speaks English²

As of 2021, 68.3% (114,831) of Kingston residents were of white ethnicity, which was the largest group. This proportion was roughly halfway in between the figures for London (53.8%) and England (81.0%). The next largest group was Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh (17.8%, 29,938)²

Kingston had a smaller proportion of Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African residents (2.8%, 4,741) when compared to both London (13.5%) and England (4.2%)²

All of Kingston's wards were more ethnically diverse in 2021 when compared to 2011. The greatest increases were generally in the north west and south east to south of the borough²

The Inclusive Kingston Strategy highlights Kingston as a Marmot Borough, with a focus on equity and tackling inequality together.

- Giving every child the best start in life
- Enabling all people to maximise their capabilities and have control over their lives
- Ensuring a healthy standard of living for all
- Creating fair employment and good work for all
- Creating and developing healthy and sustainable places and communities
- Strengthening the role and impact of ill-health prevention

Kingston Protected Characteristics Profile

[Age](#)

[Disability](#)

[Gender Reassignment](#)

[Marriage and Civil Partnership](#)

[Pregnancy and Maternity](#)

[Race](#)

[Religion or Belief](#)

[Sex](#)

[Sexual Orientation](#)

The **Kingston Protected Characteristics Profile** provides up to date information about the borough's demographic makeup. By clicking the link to the left you can access a full dashboard of protected characteristic data for Kingston. Data about residents with protected characteristics is included throughout this appendix. Further protected characteristic data includes:

- According to the most recent census:
 - 88% of residents aged 16 and over stated they were heterosexual, with 3.4% LGB+. Younger residents are more likely to be LGB+, e.g. 8% of Kingston's 16-24 year olds (the sixth-highest proportion in London) identified as lesbian, gay or bisexual in 2019²
 - 886 Kingston residents (0.7%, 1 in 150 adults) expressly stated their gender identity was different to birth (London 0.9%, England 0.6%)²
- Kingston residents are more likely to state that they do not have a religion, when compared to the London population. Just over half of our residents state that they are Christian (52.9%), with Muslim and Hindu the next most recorded religions (5.9% / 4.7%)³

Groups at risk of disadvantage

The Inclusive Kingston Strategy¹ highlights the groups on the right as a risk of additional disadvantage. These are priority groups for the life of the Inclusive Kingston Strategy.

Studies consistently demonstrate that that the social class and income of a child's parents and their local area affect a child's likelihood of doing well at school, going to university and entering elite professions.

Children in Care tend to do less well at school, are at risk of suffering poor mental health and less likely to be in education or employment at age 19

Homeless households and rough sleepers experience more poor health, with the average age of death among people who are long-term homeless considerably lower than the general population

Gypsy and Irish traveller communities are disproportionately affected by poor health, are overrepresented in the prison population, are less likely to be economically active and have lower levels of educational attainment

Refugees and asylum seekers face barriers to accessing the labour market, have poor health, and are vulnerable to discrimination, stigma and poverty

UK Armed Forces Veterans are more likely to face challenges around employment, and are more likely to have a physical, sensory or mental health condition than the wider population. Kingston signed the Armed Forces Covenant in 2018, which aims to redress these disadvantages.

People with experience of the criminal justice system often face significant challenges around financial security, employment, and housing

Health and Wellbeing

Kingston's female residents have a healthy life expectancy of 67.1 years, while males have a healthy life expectancy of 67.2 years¹

13.1% of Kingston residents have a disability as defined by the Equality Act (2010)³

The leading causes of deaths in Kingston are: Cancer (27.8%), diseases of the circulatory system and dementia (25.8%), diseases of respiratory system (12.4%)¹

Alcohol-related mortality in Kingston is below average for London. In 2020, 41 people died with alcohol listed as the underlying cause⁵

6.8% (11,511) of Kingston residents aged five years or older provide regular unpaid care to another person, or persons. 1.3% (340) 5-17 year olds are carers³

2,760 people aged 18-64 are predicted to have a learning disability⁴

5,658 people aged 18-64 are predicted to have a impaired mobility⁴

21,315 people aged 18-64 are predicted to have a common mental disorder. 8,133 people ages 18-64 are predicted to have 2 or more psychiatric disorders⁴

Four overarching themes set out the priorities for Kingston's health and care plan:

- Recognising and supporting carers of all ages.
- Tackling inequalities in health to reduce disparities for those most disadvantaged (especially in light of the COVID-19 pandemic).
- Tackling obesity in all ages, enabling people to live physically active and healthy lifestyles, at a healthy weight, to prevent ill-health and improve wellbeing
- Promoting the mental health and resilience of residents to improve health and wellbeing their whole lives.

Children and Young People

The Health and wellbeing of children in Kingston is generally better than the England average¹

There are gaps in outcomes between the most and least deprived communities¹

2,163 households are eligible for Free School Meals². Early educational attainment for children in these households is the second lowest in London (2018-19), with only 56% achieving a good level of development at the end of reception year¹

Childhood obesity rates are 70% higher in the more deprived parts of the borough on starting school, with an even larger gap in secondary education¹

Referrals to Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) increased by 13% between 2019/20 and 2020/21¹

21% of children in the borough lived in households with an income of less than 60% the UK median after housing costs have been subtracted in 2020/21³

3,444 children in Kingston have Special Educational Needs. Two thirds of this cohort are boys - the most common disability is speech, language and communication needs¹

Our values for our children

- **Value 1** - Keeping children and young people safe and supported at home and school
- **Value 2** - Helping children and young people to be healthy and make good choices about their health
- **Value 3** - Ensuring children and young people enjoy life, do well in school and get involved in activities
- **Value 4** - Prevention: providing help to families when they need it
- **Value 5** - Making sure services are right for families and work well

For further information about these values and the outcomes that support them, please view the Children and Young People's plan [here](#).

Economy and Poverty

In December 2022, according to Policy in Practice Low Income Family Tracker (LIFT) data⁴:

- 931 households are thought to have a cash shortfall, including 126 privately renting households and 131 council tenants
 - 612 households are in Temporary Accommodation
 - 1,107 households are likely to be facing food poverty
 - 3,660 households are likely to be facing fuel poverty
 - 7,218 households are likely to be facing water poverty

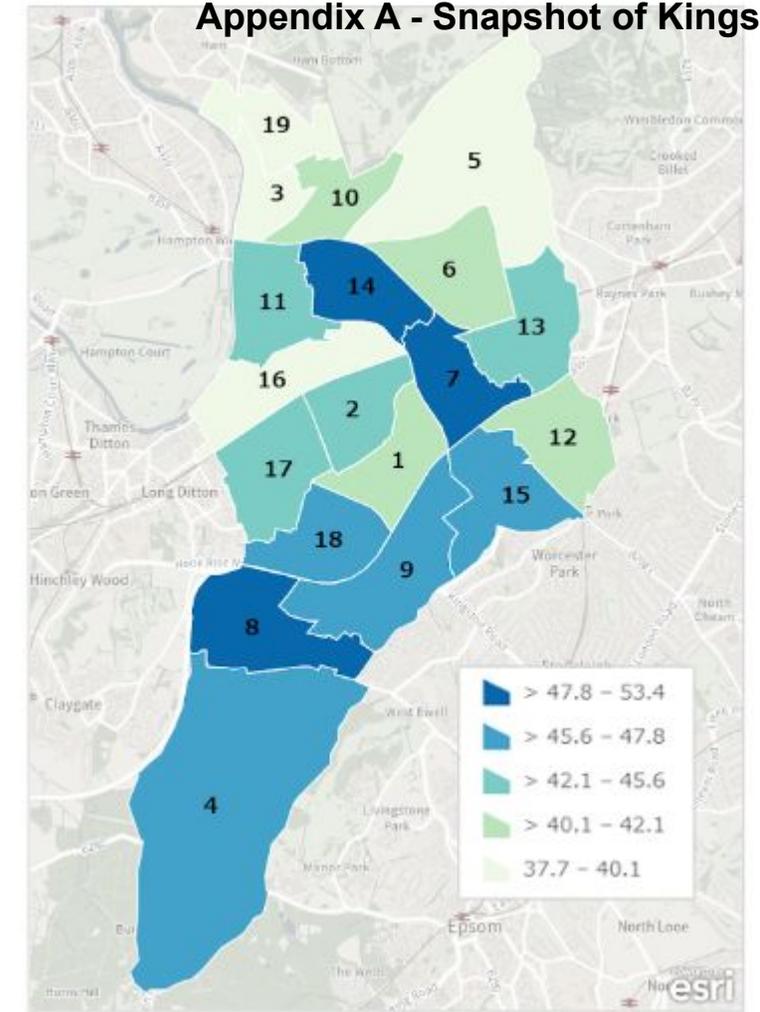
Hook, Alexandra / Berrylands, Old Malden and Coombe Hill have relatively more older residents with lower energy efficiency of housing⁵

44.2% of households are deprived in one or more dimensions (education, employment, health or housing). This is the 4th lowest in London¹.

One area in Kingston is in the top 20% of the most deprived areas in England, and 4 others fall within the top 40% most deprived areas⁶

In England in 2021, full-time employees could typically expect to spend around 9.1 times their workplace-based annual earnings on purchasing a home. In Kingston this rises to 15.2 times their earnings⁷

Appendix A - Snapshot of Kingston Need



Norbiton (53.4%) had the largest proportion of households that were deprived in one or more dimensions, whilst St Mark's & Seething Wells (37.8%) had the smallest. However, when considering raw numbers, Surbiton Hill (2223) had the highest count. The areas with the higher percentages were generally located along Kingston Road (to the east of Kingston Town) and to the south of the borough.

Skills and Employment

At approximately 66%, Kingston and London have a similar overall percentage of economically active people, which is just over 5% higher than England¹

Kingston is the median London borough for the percentage of those in employment that work full/part-time¹

Kingston's top 5 industries include: human health and social work activities (13.5%), wholesale and retail (12.7%), education (11.3%), and professional, scientific and technical activities (10.6%) and Information and communication (8.7%)¹

Since the last Census in 2011, human health and social work activities has risen from third to become Kingston's most prominent industry (previously wholesale and retail)¹

A high proportion (44.3%) of Kingston residents within employment age are employed in higher and lower managerial, administrative and professional occupations compared to London (38.2%) and England (33.1%)¹

18.9% of residents are estimated to be earning below the Living Wage in 2021. This is around the same as the average London Borough²

Relative to London and England as a whole, the long-term unemployed and never worked category is underrepresented in Kingston. The category accounts for 7% of Kingston's residents aged 16 years and over¹

Kingston Skills and Employment Partnership priorities:

- Participation: addressing the decline in active engagement in the labour market for many, including a focus on older people (50+), with support and information to encourage active engagement.
- Transition: supporting the employed and unemployed to move towards better and better paid employment, or grow their career potential; and supporting recruitment to key sectors such a care and green economy.
- Additional barriers to employment: including targeting those with disabilities, mental health challenges, care leavers, women, migrants, BAME communities and older workers.
- Build employment and skills support into community hubs model
- Enhance voluntary sector input into skills and employment pathways and promotion of volunteering and work experience opportunities

Environment

58% of journeys in Kingston are made by sustainable transport

We have 1850 hectares of green space

48% of waste is currently recycled

The Kingston Climate Action Plan sets out priorities for action. Relevant activity includes:

- Supporting energy efficiency
- Increasing generation and access of renewable energy
- Using natural systems to reduce the impacts of climate change
- Reducing waste and driving forward a circular economy
- Encouraging sustainable diets and food use and disposal
- Promoting active travel and reducing emissions from transport
- Developing our local "green economy"
- Increasing Kingston's resilience to the impacts of climate change

Appendix B

Further Information

- [The Kingston Partnership](#)

The Kingston Partnership



In October 2022, The Kingston Strategic Partnership and the Kingston Health and Wellbeing Board combined to become a new strategic partnership for Kingston. This partnership meets regularly as the Kingston Partnership Board.

This Partnership is responsible for setting the overarching vision for the borough, for developing the borough plan, and for ensuring that the Kingston Partnership works together to achieve shared aims.

The Kingston Partnership has overseen the development of this strategy and is committed to ensuring that the strategy is an effective driver of change.

