



**URBAN PARTNERS
FOR KING'S CROSS
EUSTON &
ST PANCRAS**

Working together
for a thriving urban
neighbourhood

Annual Report 2019

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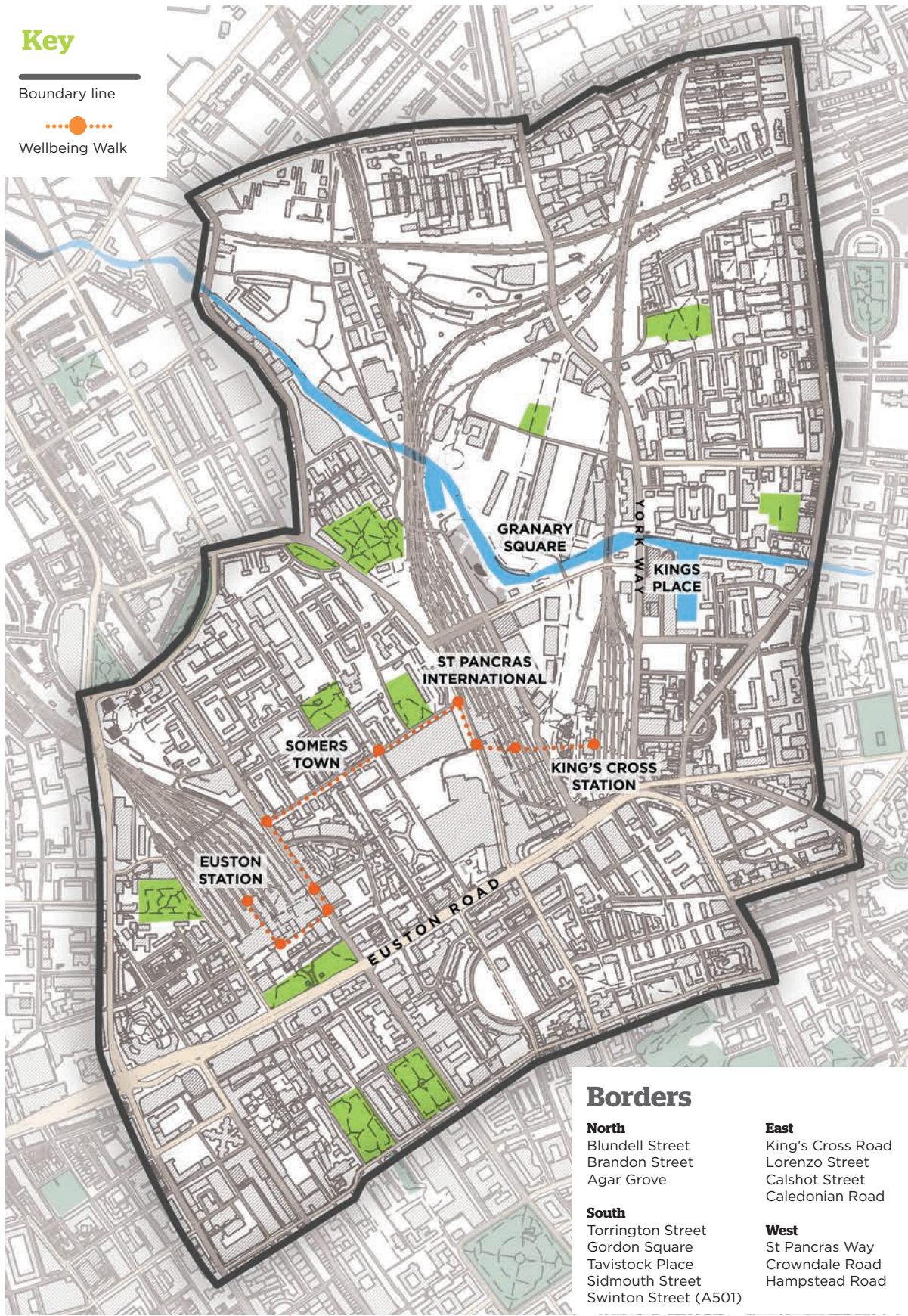


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Our Boundary



FOREWORD

Wendy Spinks, Commercial Director HS1 Ltd,
Chair of Urban Partners ('UP')

Reflecting on 2019 gives a strong sense of déjà vu. Externally, we have experienced another year of significant turbulence and uncertainty; but throughout it, our voluntary business partnership has continued to build links with local people and communities within our area.

This year's highlights have included the Homework Club going from strength to strength and we were delighted to see the most recent cohort of Maria Fidelis' Students securing fantastic A Level results.

We also successfully held the third annual Careers Expo in October, with around 140 young people attending to meet and talk to our member businesses. In the same vein of empowering the next generation, we developed and launched the Youth Delivery Group, made up of local young people who were given a budget and set the challenge of creating and launching a project to support the community. The initiative provided an interesting blueprint for future potential projects in the area.

Volunteering naturally sits right at the heart of what Urban Partners is about, and we used our 2019 Hero Project to formalise the volunteering opportunities available to member employees. Partnering with Camden Giving, our member employees can now access volunteering opportunities tailored to match their professional skills and qualifications.

The project has finished the year at a fantastic pace, with members beginning to take full advantage of the initiative.

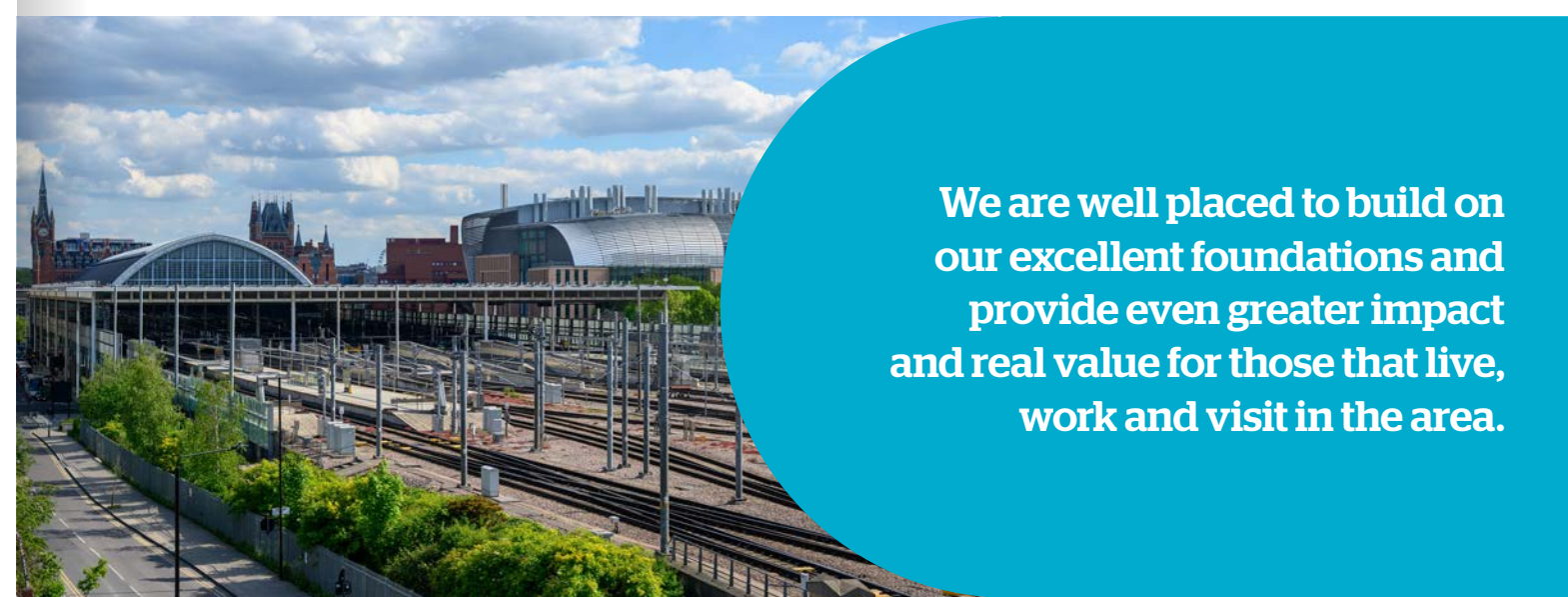
It is not just us talking about ourselves, others are too. As part of our drive to build awareness for the work we do, and indeed our model of working, we are also increasingly now securing publicity through awards

shortlists and media coverage. Notably, our voluntary activity was profiled in the Evening Standard, while the Homework Club also received significant coverage on BBC News. We were delighted to be shortlisted for the Business Green Sustainability Leaders Award, as well as receiving a High Commendation at the Islington and Camden Sustainability Awards. We are proud that our work is being recognised for its value and innovation, and equally that it is drawing the attention and interest of others.

This year, we also said farewell to our inaugural Next Generation Coordinator Peter McDonough, who retired in June. Peter, with his immense passion and drive, is clearly a huge loss to the partnership, but thankfully in Wizdom Layne, we have been able to find a ready-made replacement brimming with the vision and enthusiasm required to keep driving our Next Generation work forward.

Our watchword over the past year has been 'impact'. We know that through our education, careers and volunteering initiatives we collectively deliver a fantastic range of support for local people. Through the Wellbeing Walk, we also make a real everyday difference for people who work in and visit the area.

With this in mind, the Board has committed significant time to reviewing and refining our strategic thinking, building a clearer framework for all our projects going forward. The idea of the framework has been to provide clarity about our priorities and direction, but also to empower the delivery groups by providing a clear set of benchmarks for developing projects, removing the need for constant reference to the Board. Finally, the



We are well placed to build on our excellent foundations and provide even greater impact and real value for those that live, work and visit in the area.

new strategy also ensures that every new project will be designed with a clear sense of KPIs, measurement and means of evaluation from the outset. We know Urban Partners does fantastic work, but to effectively demonstrate and share it with others we need to be consistent at measuring our impact.

With our new framework in place, 2020 brings great promise - a renewed focus on helping to tackle some of the leading issues of the day at a local level. Our work will include a new Hero Project developed by our delivery groups and focused on sustainability. Plans are also advanced to deliver a second Wellbeing Walk to help even more people reduce their exposure to air pollution by avoiding the Euston Road.

Finally, I'd like to thank all our members, supporters and partners for helping us over the past year. In particular, I'd like to welcome our newest Board Member, HS2, and Executive Members, Tileyard and Doubletree.

There is much to be excited about in 2020. We are well placed to build on our excellent foundations and provide even greater impact and real value for those that live, work and visit in the area.



Linking businesses to their local talent pool is an incredibly important part of achieving a successful community and businesses environment.



EXTERNAL CONTRIBUTION

Cllr. Georgia Gould,
Camden Council Leader

King's Cross and the surrounding area has continued to transform at an incredible pace across 2019 and this has brought significant benefits. But moving in to 2020, the challenge is clear - more must be done to make sure that our local communities experience the benefits these changes bring. Urban Partners will play an important role in this; its member businesses must continue to forge meaningful relationships with the local community, to harness their skills and talents and make the continuing transformation around Kings Cross a collaborative success.

From the Homework Club and Careers Expo, to its mentoring and volunteering programmes, Urban Partners provides local Camden residents with support, advice and access to many of the leading businesses in our area. Linking businesses to their local talent pool is an incredibly important part of achieving a successful community and business environment.

We look forward to working closely across 2020 to develop even stronger links between local young people and Urban Partners member businesses.



WELCOME TO URBAN PARTNERS AND OUR HOME: KING'S CROSS, ST PANCRAS AND EUSTON

Founded in 2011, Urban Partners is a voluntary business partnership made up of organisations in the King's Cross, St Pancras and Euston area.

Urban Partners exists to represent its businesses, provide benefits to its member's almost 11,000 employees, and to contribute to the local community. Much of its work focuses on projects designed to tackle environmental and sustainability challenges, and to forge closer links between its member businesses and local young people.

Its work is funded by its diverse membership base, ranging from global organisations to local businesses across a wide variety of sectors.

Members give their time, expertise and resources in order to build and sustain a thriving urban neighbourhood that is a good place to work, live and do business.



Our area

The area that Urban Partners calls home has changed beyond recognition in the past decade. Much of the change has been positive – the regeneration of St Pancras, the opening of iconic venue Kings Place, and the wider development such as Coal Drops Yard, to name a few. The area has also been boosted through the international links delivered through Eurostar. The arrival of a diverse and exciting array of world-leading businesses has also brought many opportunities. But, alongside all the good news, many local residents will understandably feel that they have suffered many of the downsides of the changes – the cranes, dust and building works – without benefitting properly from the transformation of the area.

The challenge

Addressing this challenge is at the core of Urban Partners purpose – through our fantastic membership, Urban Partners has the means to deliver real positive change for local communities. As businesses we must forge close links with local young people, supporting their education, and building awareness of the opportunities we offer. As a collective partnership, we can collaborate to improve the local area, whether it be through providing alternative routes to avoid air pollution, or facilitating wider initiatives around homelessness. For the area to really reach its full potential, it needs to be an inclusive community, and Urban Partners has an important role to play in supporting this.



The arrival of a diverse and exciting array of world-leading businesses has also brought many opportunities.



OUR PRIORITIES

Since its foundation, Urban Partners has existed to:

- Benefit our employees
- Support and engage the next generation
- Represent our member businesses



Emma Williams,
Vice Chair of Urban Partners

“Having experienced a number of changes in recent years in terms of both the member organisations and the people from those organisations that represented them, 2019 has been the year in which we have taken stock of what it is we are trying to do as a partnership. We have used the time to redefine the purpose of why we all want to be a part of Urban Partners. Through thought provoking board meetings, complimented by engaging executive and delivery groups meetings, we have been able to revisit and define our purpose - clarifying what exactly it is we are trying to do as a community, and with the community.

“It continues to be an exciting time for the area, with more and more people calling it their home, both to live and work in, so the work we do is as important as ever. Our goal in 2020 is to blend these communities together, strengthening the sustainability of the area as a whole and creating a cohesive vision for the new decade that benefits all.”

All three strands of our work are supported by our delivery groups and also by our Hero Projects - initiatives that we have developed and supported to have a transformational physical, social or environmental impact in the area. From the Homework Club, to the Wellbeing Walk, our Hero Projects are designed to reflect our three priorities and ultimately our purpose.

Delivering Maximum Impact

As Urban Partners has grown and evolved, it has developed the capacity to deliver an ever-greater breadth of projects around its three core priorities. This year, the Board has worked to review its strategic principles and to devise a new set of benchmarking criteria to ensure that all Urban Partner projects and work are designed to reflect its priorities and to be delivered with maximum impact.

This means that Urban Partner projects will always:

- Provide a clear opportunity for employee engagement across a range of companies
- Have a demonstrable community benefit - driving positive change to the benefit of local residents
- Demonstrate a commitment to collaborate for maximum impact

Measurement and evaluation is of course crucial to ensuring delivery with maximum impact, and every Urban Partner project must be built with clear KPIs focused on outputs and outcomes.

OUR HERO PROJECTS

The Homework Club

The Homework Club was founded in 2016 when students congregating in Kings Place, led member businesses to realise that many young people in the area don't have a quiet space at home to study.

Three years down the line and the Homework Club has continued to grow rapidly. It has expanded at Eurostar, been introduced at Springer Nature, with a quiet space also being created at LNER, meaning that in any given week, over 50 students can benefit from the initiative. With Ted Baker, Argent and Springer Nature also providing tutors, the A level students are now able to receive support for whatever subject they are studying for.

Underlining the value of the Homework Club project, those involved were delighted to see a fantastic set of A level results for the students attending the initiative for the last academic year. Every single Maria Fidelis student passed, and grades between A* and B were secured in 48% of exams. Georgie Speller, the School's Head of Sixth Form was unequivocal in her praise for the impact of the Homework Club in supporting these great achievements.

The initiative has also continued to receive considerable attention in the media and was recently featured in the Evening Standard and on BBC London News.

Our plans for 2020:

- ▶ Increase the number of students attending
- ▶ Increase the number of Urban Partner volunteer tutors
- ▶ Hold an Urban Partners Homework Club graduation at the end of the school year
- ▶ Continue to build the Homework Club alumni LinkedIn group



Georgie Speller, Head of Sixth Form, Maria Fidelis:

"Homework Club remains one of the jewels in the crown of MF Sixth Form. It is so wonderful that the students get this opportunity to interact with a business on a weekly basis and obtain the much-needed academic support that they benefit from. I'm a French teacher, and the students' oral confidence improves measurably by their exposure to the homework club, so that in the A-level results in 2019, speaking was by far the strongest skill for all students. It's a superb initiative and one that I hope continues and inspires other companies to do the same!"

Gary Smithson, LNER:

"We are now in our fourth year of hosting the club at LNER (and formerly Virgin Trains), with growing numbers of students wanting to use the space for homework, as well as seeking other opportunities. We have held a summer school, where some of the local students have had a chance to impress us ready for our graduate scheme. We have seen many students request help with CV's as well as guidance for interviews. The homework club continues to thrive and develop taking new paths as we embed the scheme. We are looking forward to welcoming yet more students in the New Year and beyond. For me it has been encouraging to see students and the LNER team at King's Cross working together for the common aim of developing themselves, whether that be academically, social or volunteering they are all helping to make this a truly inspiring place to be."

Rebecca Cranshaw, Eurostar:

"This year Homework Club welcomed its 4th cohort of students in 2019, bringing the total number of students who've attended since 2016 to 87. The most recent students taking A-levels last summer went on to study in Warwick, Cardiff, UAL, KCL and Royal Holloway as well as many other universities. Our current cohort of students are very ambitious, and I continue to be impressed by their determination and drive to pursue academic goals and undertake community and charity work too. Homework Club is a fantastic project to be involved in and it's great to meet so many Urban Partner member staff who are willing to go above and beyond to help the students."

OUR HERO PROJECTS

The Wellbeing Walk

Set up in 2016, as London's first designated station to station walking route, the Wellbeing Walk provides people with a less polluted, less congested and more pleasant walking route between the major stations on the Euston Road. With increasing evidence about the harmful effects of air pollution, the topic has shot to near the top of the public health agenda. This has led to other areas around the UK looking to the Wellbeing Walk as a potential innovative solution to adopt.

Demonstrating the continued value of the route, Urban Partners commissioned the Kings College London Air Quality Unit, the UK's leading department of its type, to undertake updated air quality measurements of the route. Conducted in June 2019, the researchers found that the Wellbeing Walk is over 60% less polluted than the Euston Road. For regular visitors, this can make a genuine difference to their lives.

Based on the success of the original Wellbeing Walk, Urban Partners has begun to explore the opportunity and feasibility for designing a 'southern artery' to go the other side of the Euston Road. The additional route would be set up with the ambition of diverting even more footfall away from the heavily polluted Euston Road.

Looking forward:

- ▶ Continue to develop the new 'southern artery' of the Wellbeing Walk
- ▶ Seek to continue to increase usage of the Walk by working with Google and LNER to ensure it appears on all virtual maps
- ▶ Recognising the growing demand for the Wellbeing Walk model, we will also continue to promote the initiative, and support other areas looking to introduce it
- ▶ Working with HS2 and Camden on longer term plans



"The Wellbeing Walk has become a case study that others are now replicating around London and beyond."

Andrew Grieves, Senior Air Quality Analyst, Kings College London



OUR HERO PROJECTS

Urban Partners Volunteering Programme

As a partnership whose success is based on the voluntary collaboration of our member businesses, and their commitment to share their time, expertise and resource to the benefit of the local area, volunteering is right at the heart of what Urban Partners is about. In 2019, Urban Partners began a three-year partnership programme with Camden Giving to provide up to 200 UP member employees with tailored skilled local volunteering opportunities, annually. Through Camden Giving, member employees are able to have their skills matched to the needs of a local charity, to ensure that it is a meaningful volunteering opportunity that really benefits both the charity and the volunteer.

With the Programme up and running, more than 200 member employees have registered an interest and 72 have taken part in skills-based volunteering this year. In total, 25 different local charities have benefitted from volunteer's time, knowledge and support.



Volunteering is right at the heart of what Urban Partners is about.

Our plans for 2020:

- ▶ Continue to manage the delivery of the Urban Partners Volunteering Programme
- ▶ Undertake a full review of the Programme in October 2020

BENEFITTING OUR EMPLOYEES

From networking events to improving the environment in which we work, Urban Partners seeks to enhance the working environment for its more than 11,000-member employees. In addition to our Hero Projects - the Wellbeing Walk, and the Camden Giving Volunteering Programme - we have delivered a range of other initiatives over the past 12 months with the aim of making the area a more attractive location for people to work.



- ▶ UP currently runs three networking groups for member employees. These are: the HR Network (87members), the PA Network (141 members) and the UPCOMMS Network (132 members)
- ▶ A number of networking / information sharing / masterclass sessions have been run throughout 2019. Events included:
 - A social media masterclass with Google; a LinkedIn workshop with Springer Nature; and an Instagram competition with Argent
 - PA events have included a chocolate truffle making class at the Rotunda, yoga at the Lighterman and an 'In conversation with male PA's' session at The Standard
 - Four HR events were held, focusing on topics including mental health, diversity, and mindfulness in the workplace
- ▶ Popular monthly yoga classes were held with Sweaty Betty in January, March and February
- ▶ The Urban Partners football tournament was held in the summer, with 12 member companies participating
- ▶ A 'benefiting employees' survey was distributed to explore what employees most value, and what they would like more of
- ▶ In December we held the fourth annual Christmas Choir Showcase of local corporate choirs in aid of local causes
- ▶ Internet safety session for parents



Our plans for 2020:

- ▶ Increase the number of employees participating in all networks
- ▶ Deliver employee activities to reflect member responses to the 2019 employee survey
- ▶ Hold a general business networking event for all member employees
- ▶ Hold an annual Urban Partners Leader Event, to identify and discuss the key issues facing businesses in the area
- ▶ Continue to host quarterly PA, HR and UPCOMMS Networks, with a target of increasing participation across all networks by 10%
- ▶ Continue to work with Camden Giving to deliver the Volunteer Programme

SUPPORTING OUR NEXT GENERATION

Young people are a vital part of the area's future. As a business partnership we want to work to support their education and connect them with employment opportunities in the area.

Urban Partners' Next Generation work in 2019 has included:

- ▶ The Homework Club now supports over 50 students every week
- ▶ We held the third annual Urban Partners Youth Careers Expo in October. Hosted at Havas's office, over 20 local businesses took part and with over 140 young people registered to attend. The Expo included careers showcases, masterclasses and a panel Q&A, bringing together local employers to answer questions about how they managed their passions and their paychecks.
- ▶ Springer Nature are piloting a monthly mentoring scheme with 28 employees mentoring 22 students from Elizabeth Garrett Anderson School. Dependent on feedback on the Scheme, Urban Partners will look to expand the initiative through other Urban Partners members.
- ▶ Promoted and supported the rollout of the Safety Net programme to over 20 schools across Camden and Islington, and linked the initiative to the Guardian Newswise Programme.
- ▶ Piloting Youth Careers Board to advise on youth issues connecting to employment in the local area.
- ▶ Deliver the Gatsby Business Challenge amongst three local schools.
- ▶ Supporting local businesses with the local initiatives including Islington's 100 Hours of Work and Camden STEAM's Business Pledge.
- ▶ Supported the Reading Agency's Summer Reading Challenge in Camden and Islington

Through our new benchmarking categories for this strand of our work, all Urban Partners projects focused on the next generation will:

- ▶ Address an identified need not currently served by anyone in the area
- ▶ Target delivering a service for young people aged between 14-24
- ▶ Be co-created with someone from the peer group

In June 2019, Urban Partners' bid a sad farewell to its first Next Generation Coordinator, Peter McDonough, who stepped down to a well-earned retirement. Peter brought incredible drive and passion, helping to get a range of initiatives off the ground, and will of course be missed. Thankfully, in Wizdom Layne, Urban Partners found a ready-made replacement who has been able to bring huge energy and enthusiasm to the role to continue Peter's good work. Wizdom brings a host of new ideas with him, and has notable focus on getting local young people into work.

The Homework Club now supports over 50 students every week.



Our plans for 2020:

- ▶ Develop a close relationship with local sixth form colleges to include talks, workshops and masterclasses on site and in business.
- ▶ Continuing to develop the Youth Delivery Board to help shape the future relationship between the local young people and businesses.
- ▶ Continue to increase the number of Homework Clubs and UP members participating in the Homework Club initiative by either hosting quiet spaces or volunteering
- ▶ Host the fourth Youth Careers Expo and increase the number of attendees participating and taking part with great coordination with local stakeholders, colleges and schools.
- ▶ Strengthen Urban Partners' connections with local youth groups and work to help break down the barriers to opportunities for local young people, including through mentoring and work experience.





**Wizdom Layne,
Next Generation Coordinator**

"It's a privilege to continue the fantastic work begun by Peter McDonagh in taking over the coordination of Urban Partners Next Generation work. Urban Partners is made up of an incredible diversity of businesses, with extensive resources and varied skill-sets who are seeking for ways to engage with local talent and provide unique access to some of the most exciting and innovative business in the UK and the world who are here on our door step.

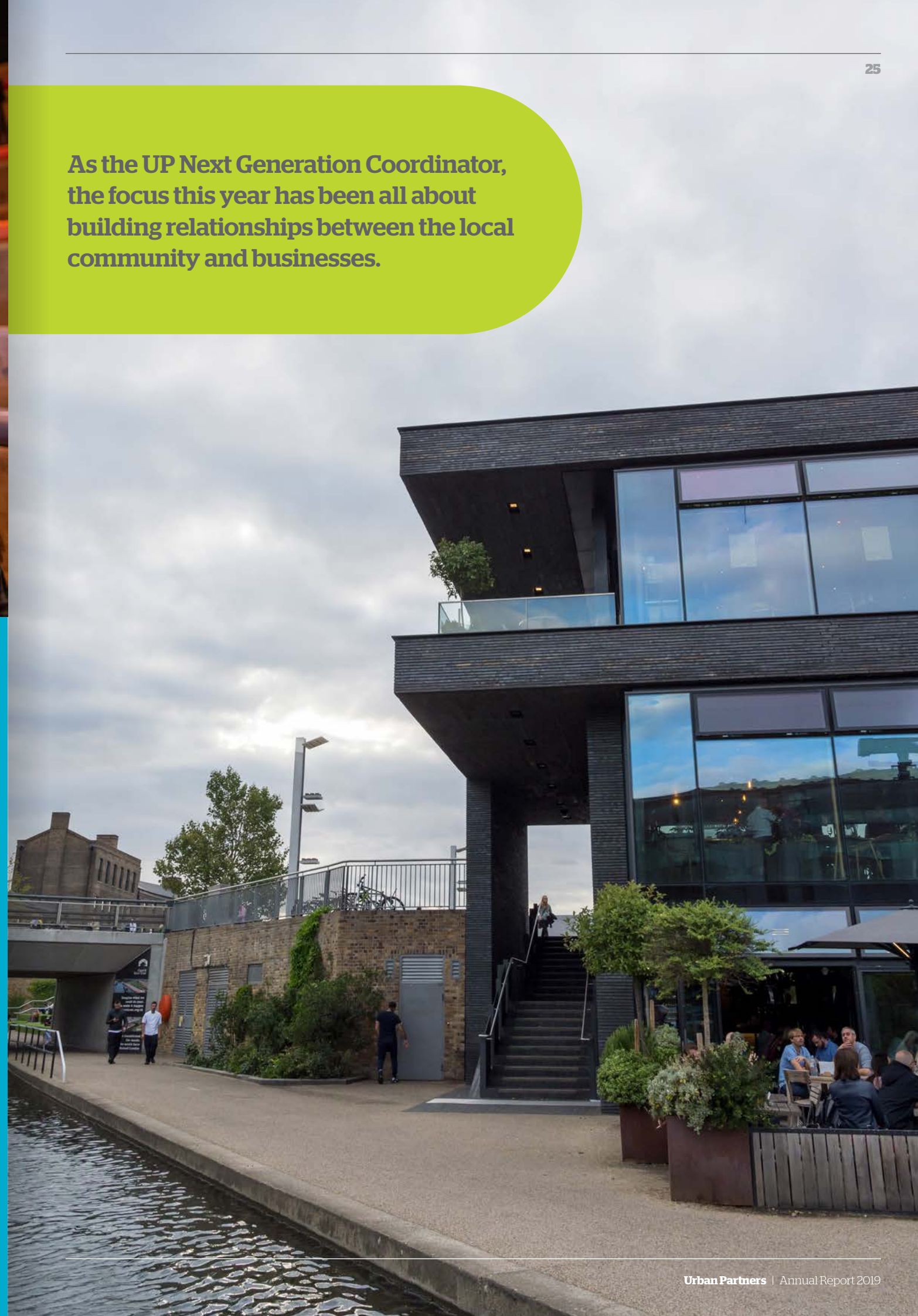
Initiatives like the Youth Careers Expo is a great example of how we can utilise the power of our business community to inspire the next generation of local talent and provide access to hard to reach sectors of the careers market.

As the UP Next Generation Coordinator, the focus this year has been all about building relationships between the local community and businesses. From events like Footie, Foodn' FIFA, to the expansion of Homework Club and creating work experience opportunities on

behalf of businesses who do not have their own programs, UP has extended from supporting several hundred, to several thousand local young people. Next year promises more of the same, working with the local colleagues, youth centres and Councils to build Urban Partners' support for the next generation's journey through education, into employment, and then building career progression."








**UP has extended from
supporting several hundred,
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**As the UP Next Generation Coordinator,
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OUR
IMPACT

 Benefitting Employees	 29 Yoga class attendees	<p>Yoga Classes in Jan, Feb and March: 29 attendees</p> <p>Christmas Choir Showcase: 5 member choirs</p> <p>UP football tournament: 12 company team</p>
 Engaging the next generation	 Reach of over 7,000 students	<p>Our Youth Career Expo had 140 attendees and represented 22 businesses</p> <p>UP has worked with 25 primary and secondary schools in the past year with a reach of over 7,000 students</p> <p>Eurostar, LNER and Springer Nature, successfully held Homework Clubs and quiet spaces providing over 1,000 student places across the year</p>
 Representing Business	 Shortlisted for 2 business awards	<p>Media coverage in 5 local and specialist publications</p> <p>Coverage in the BBC and The Evening Standard</p> <p>Shortlisted for 2 business awards</p> <p>Met with Local MP, Keir Starmer</p>
 Volunteering	 200 employees interested in volunteering	<p>200 member employees registered interest in volunteering</p> <p>72 member employees have taken part in skills-based volunteering</p> <p>25 local charities benefited from volunteer's time, knowledge and support</p>

 Instagram	 +50% followers	<p>1,469 followers</p> <p>756 followers gained - over 50% increase</p> <p>9,932 Engagements</p> <p>9,397 Likes received</p> <p>474 Comments received</p>
 Twitter	 6,755 Engagements	<p>1,938 followers</p> <p>6,755 Engagements</p> <p>643 link clicks</p> <p>1,765 Likes received</p> <p>668 Retweets</p> <p>505.3k Organic impressions, a 14.8% increase on last year</p>
 Website	 10,042 Website sessions	<p>7,515 users</p> <p>10,042 sessions</p> <p>21,832 page views</p> <p>2.17 pages per session</p> <p>1:39 min average session duration</p>
 Newsletter	 2,879 Opens	<p>792 subscribers, a 60% increase on 2018</p> <p>2,879 opens</p> <p>35% average open rate</p> <p>20% click through rate</p>

RAISING OUR PROFILE

Across 2019, Urban Partners has sought to raise its profile across a wide range of both internal and external audiences.

Internally, Urban Partners continuously looks to raise awareness of the many different activities, events and programmes that member employees can benefit from. These communications are carried out through newsletters, the Urban Partners' website and its social channels.

Externally Urban Partners has sought to raise its profile and build awareness of the work it does with a wide range of audiences including local and London-wide decision makers and policy makers, prospective members, other voluntary partnerships and BIDs, and the wider public. The key means of engaging with these audiences has included participation in and hosting of events, media coverage and stakeholder meetings. Of note, Urban Partners has:

- ▶ Secured media coverage in a range of publications including BBC London News, the Evening Standard, and the Islington Gazette
- ▶ Been shortlisted for the Business Green Leaders Awards in June and won a special commendation for the Wellbeing Walk for the Camden & Islington Sustainability Awards in November.





REPRESENTING OUR BUSINESSES

Our work in this area is focused on giving our business members a louder voice and enabling greater impact with collaborative working. We seek to engage businesses, keep them informed on the issues that affect them and develop programmes to support them. The collective weight of Urban Partners' members, representing almost 11,000 employees, holds significant influence with decisionmakers and politicians.

This year, we have worked to identify the issues that matter most to our members. Reflecting member feedback, Urban Partners will work with an even stronger emphasis on issues around sustainability in 2020.

In 2019, we also built positive relationships with several key local stakeholders including local MP and current Labour Leadership candidate, Keir Starmer. Starmer has voiced considerable support for Urban Partners and plans to work to support the partnership in 2020.

UP currently has 20 paying Board and Executive members as well as over 40 free 'Urban Partner' members.

Cllr Asima Shaikh, Cabinet Member for Inclusive Economy and Jobs, Islington Council:



"We are committed to building an inclusive economy that works for the benefit of both businesses and residents, and Urban Partners can play an important role in helping to connect businesses with their local community. The last year has seen some great examples of this, with mentoring and employability workshops for young people in schools, and support for local youth providers to build meaningful partnerships and career opportunities. We are delighted to have the support of many Urban Partners members with our 100 hours World of Work initiative, to inspire young people in the borough and equip them with the skills they need to succeed. In 2020 we will be doing some exciting and innovative work to help vulnerable young adults in the communities closest to Kings Cross, and look forward to working closely with Urban Partners on this."

Get in involved with Urban Partners

We are always looking to work with new partners, gain new members, and support local initiatives. If you think that Urban Partners can help you, or you would like to find out more about what we do, please visit our website www.urbanpartners.london or get in touch Hello@urbanpartners.london

Board and Executive Members



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