
Cripplegate Foundation

Research Project brief

March 2023



Cripplegate Foundation

VISION

Our vision for Islington is of an equal borough where everyone can enjoy a life free from poverty and access the many opportunities on offer in their local area.

ABOUT US

Cripplegate Foundation is a local grant-making foundation supporting residents and groups working in the London Borough of Islington and a small area of the City of London. Our vision is of a society where everyone has the opportunity to live a rewarding and fulfilled life, free from poverty and inequality.

Islington Giving was launched in September 2010, pioneering new ways of raising money and bringing much needed resources into Islington. Islington Giving brings together a coalition of local, regional, and national funders, residents, businesses, and voluntary organisations to tackle stubborn issues of poverty and inequality. Islington Giving works *with*, not *for*, residents and together we invest in young people, support families, and reach isolated people.

Across Cripplegate Foundation and Islington Giving we make grants of £1.7m a year from the income from our endowment and on behalf of others. You can read more about our work on our websites: <https://cripplegate.org/> and <https://islingtongiving.org.uk/>

BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH

In the Cripplegate Foundation strategy 2022-24, we agreed to:

Conduct a new research project into the impact of the pandemic on the most disadvantaged residents in the borough and adapt our work as a result.

We wanted to understand more about the state of the borough after the pandemic and whether any changes and/or lasting effects should impact what and how we fund. Since then, the cost of living crisis has borne down on everyone but particularly those living in poverty. We are also aware that for many of the people helped by the groups we support, there is always a cost of living crisis. Islington is an unequal place to live and so-called crises only accentuate this.

In 2008, Cripplegate Foundation produced [*Invisible Islington: Living in Poverty in Inner London*](#). The report aimed to:

“shine a light on the poverty that exists in Islington, to explore the factors that make it so entrenched – ill health, debt, isolation and lack of opportunity – and to re-think the actions needed to tackle it.”

In particular, we were interested in the role of Cripplegate Foundation, as an independent, local funder. How could we best respond?

In response to *Invisible Islington*, Cripplegate Foundation committed to supporting in four ways:

- Reducing debt
- Building opportunity
- Reinforcing family, community and friends
- Improving health

As a result of this report, and the funding collaboration which followed, Islington Giving was formed to bring additional financial resources into the borough to help meet need identified by the report.

In 2012, Cripplegate Foundation followed up with a second report, *Distant Neighbours; Poverty and Inequality in Islington. How we will respond*. This report asked:

“How have people’s lives changes over the last five years? How are they faring in the current climate of economic uncertainty, public sector cuts and welfare reform? How do people feel about living in an unequal borough and what the consequences of doing do? What might the future hold? And what can we do about it?”

In response to *Distant Neighbours*, Cripplegate Foundation, including Islington Giving, committed to responding in three main ways:

- By supporting practical initiatives that can make a difference to people’s lives today
- By partnering with others to help prevent problems and achieve long-term change
- By influencing wider change where it will benefit local residents.

This led to us committing to funding a range of work:

- Social Prescribing
- Well-being challenge fund
- Young catalyst
- Good Neighbours Schemes
- Unlocking Islington (supporting residents to “get out and about in Islington” to make the most of what the borough has to offer.

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- Access to affordable credit

In the ten years since that piece of work, a lot has changed for residents, notably living through the pandemic and the current high levels of inflation, including food and fuel poverty. However, as both *Invisible Islington* and *Distant Neighbours* showed, for many of the people supported by the groups we fund, life has always been difficult. Inequality and poverty are not new to Islington. There is much to celebrate in the work we have funded over the last 12 years, and in the achievements of so many of the groups we have been able to support. However, for the Foundation, with the limited resources at our disposal, the question continues to be: how can we best support people living in poverty in the borough?

Research question

We want to revisit the central questions posed in *Distant Neighbours*:

- Have people's lives changes over the last ten years? If so, how?
- How are residents and communities faring – economically, socially, health-wise, culturally? What's got better? What's got worse?
- What might the future hold?
- And what can we do about it? What is our role as a local, place-based funder? How do we best use our resources to address inequality in Islington and Cripplegate Ward?

METHOD

We would like residents to be involved in the research so that the process of compiling this work is informed and influenced by local people and their own lives and experiences, in addition to offering an opportunity for local people to develop skills and build a stake in the outcome. We are interested in how potential research partners can involve residents in this work, for example as community researchers, whether directly or through partners.

We would like the research to include:

- Review of current, local literature. What other research is available from partner organisation in particular, including the Council, other statutory bodies and voluntary sector groups who have conducted their own research post-pandemic.
- Interviews with and involvement of residents
- Interviews with stakeholder groups, particularly the voluntary sector.

TIME FRAME

Cripplegate Foundation will want to use this work to inform our grant giving from 2024. Ideally, the research project will be completed by autumn, 2023.

BUDGET

We have up to £10,000 to spend on this work.

NEXT STEPS

If this project is interesting to you, please send us a short description of how you would plan to conduct the work, some examples of how you have worked with other clients, and a brief description of why this project is of interest. Please keep your expression of interest to three pages.

We are happy to have a discussion before you do this, or for you to put down some initial ideas which we can work with you to shape. Please don't write a whole project plan at this point. We are interested to hear about your approach, and particularly how you propose to involve residents.

Deadline for submission of interest: May 8th, 2023.

Please contact: Sarah Benioff, Director, sarah.benioff@cripplegate.org.uk or Anne Shewring, Programme Director, anne.shewring@cripplegate.org.uk

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