



BOOST

2024-25 Annual Report



BOOST

Celebrating 10 successful years





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Welcome to BOOST's 2024-25 Annual Report



Lawrence Graham and Barnet Council Head of Economy and Skills John Bryson

In 2024/2025, the BOOST team faced another challenging year with the cost-of-living crisis, continuing to affect the circumstances of many residents in Barnet.

The team managed to achieve impressive results by helping 388 residents find employment and signing up 766 local people for our employment & skills programme, giving us a conversion rate of 51%. This achievement was made possible through the hard work and collaboration of all the different teams in BOOST.

The wide range of knowledge and expertise across the team was instrumental in continuing to try innovative ideas and pilot programmes to address the demand coming through our doors. This year we also started working closely with Barnet Council in getting the face-to-face team from Colindale reception back into Burnt Oak Library to have a much more holistic front door approach.

Externally we secured ongoing funding from World Jewish Relief to employ 3 Employment Advisers to support Ukrainian refugees from who have been excellent in achieving great outcomes, helping 49 Ukrainian refugees into employment.

The Outreach Team was able to provide support to many other parts of the borough, Tara, our UKSPF Project Manager delivered amazing results across the WLA (West London Alliance) through the UKSPF (UK Shared Prosperity Fund) Programme which has led us to securing an additional year's funding.

We were excited to mobilise a new pilot project called Jobs Plus, which is based on the Grange Estate in East Finchley. Andrew, the Project Manager, has so far recruited resident champions and is working towards achieving and exceeding the targets which are signing up 132 residents from the estate and helping 40 into paid employment, this exciting programme was developed in America, is being independently evaluated by the Learning and Work Institute. The programme will have a youth focus in 25/26 and has already had confirmation of funding from Youth Futures Foundation along with DWP (Department of Work and Pensions).

We had another exciting and successful year in managing The Barnet Group apprenticeship programme, which will help more residents into opportunities within the Group at the end.

2025/26 is going to be our 10th year and we are hoping to continue for another 10 years! None of this would be possible without the amazing team we have now, and all the staff that helped us along the way in previous years.

Lawrence Graham, BOOST Manager



All Clients

Engagement (employment sign ups)	Targets	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	YTD
Achieved in month		60	84	64	98	89	73	72	70	35	43	33	45	766
Achieved in Year	1040	60	144	208	306	395	468	540	610	645	688	721	766	
Job Outcomes	Targets	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	YTD
Apprenticeships	20	0	0	2	0	3	14	0	3	4	1	2	0	29
Construction (Apprenticeships & Jobs)		3	5	5	4	7	10	6	3	3	7	7	1	61
Health & Social Care	50	3	2	2	3	6	10	5	9	8	9	7	4	68
Achieved in month 16-29 hours		11	7	8	4	3	14	14	10	17	13	10	13	
Achieved in month 30+ hours		13	17	18	18	25	41	25	26	25	24	19	13	
Achieved in month		24	24	26	22	28	55	39	36	42	37	29	26	388
Achieved in Year including UKSPF	386	24	48	74	96	124	179	218	254	296	333	362	388	
Job Sustainment Outcomes	Targets	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	YTD
No. still employed 16-29 hours		0	0	2	10	6	5	3	3	16	11	10	12	
No. still employed 30+ hours		22	15	17	11	14	15	16	20	34	23	21	26	
Total no. into work in month	80%	28	23	29	24	24	26	22	28	55	39	31	38	85%
Job Clubs Held	Targets	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	YTD
Achieved in month	8	4	4	2	4	5	3	4	4	2	7	5	6	
Achieved in Year	100	4	8	10	14	19	22	26	30	32	39	44	50	
Job Club Attendees	Targets	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	YTD
Achieved in month	60	21	32	15	30	28	17	29	14	4	23	20	18	
Achieved in Year	750	21	53	68	98	126	143	172	186	190	213	233	251	
Meet The Employer Events Attendees	Targets	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	YTD
Achieved in month	20	19	13	118	7	26	124	0	102	0	7	218	0	
Achieved in Year	240	19	32	150	157	183	307	307	409	409	416	634	634	
Outreach Coverage	Targets	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	YTD
Amount of different venues	N/A	6	5	9	9	8	7	6	9	7	7	10	10	
Amount of different Wards	N/A	5	4	7	7	7	6	5	7	8	8	8	8	
Grahame Park	Targets	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	YTD
Engagement	100	5	9	16	11	11	5	11	6	5	7	8	15	109
Jobs	30	4	2	2	2	5	6	4	5	6	8	3	4	51
Barnet Homes Tenants	Targets	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	YTD
Engagement	200	7	9	14	4	19	28	9	12	1	6	6	6	121
Jobs	50	6	1	7	1	13	11	11	10	11	3	10	1	85
18-30 year olds only														
Engagement (employment sign ups)	Targets	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	YTD
Achieved in month		12	13	9	8	6	8	8	6	2	7	11	9	
Achieved in Year	100	12	25	34	42	48	56	64	70	72	79	90	99	99
Job Outcomes	Targets	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	YTD
Apprenticeships		0	0	2	1	1	12	0	2	1	0	2	0	21
Construction (Apprenticeships & Jobs)		1	2	2	1	1	4	0	1	0	0	2	0	14
Health & Social Care		0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	3
Achieved in month 16-29 hours		1	7	2	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	2	
Achieved in month 30+ hours		3	2	7	3	5	16	8	5	6	6	7	3	
Total achieved in month		4	4	9	4	5	16	9	6	7	6	7	5	82
Total achieved in Year	50	4	8	17	21	26	42	51	57	64	70	77	82	
External Contracts														
UKSPF	Targets	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	YTD
Number of Programme Starts	240	20	26	17	44	14	18	15	20	5	5	0	0	240
Number of Job Outcomes	36	0	6	2	7	10	2	5	9	5	0	6	7	59
STEP PROGRAMME	Targets	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	YTD
Into Work		6	7	4	3	3	6	6	5	3	4	2	0	49
Financial Inclusion	Targets	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	YTD
Number of appointments with Welfare Benefit Advisers	N/A	202	129	168	147	90	132	142	282	159	158	168	131	1908



A message from our Commissioner John Bryson

BOOST provide Barnet Council's core employment and skills offer for residents and businesses. Without them, hundreds of residents every year who don't qualify for government funded support would struggle to return to work or improve their employment situation. We are very proud of the many achievements over the last 10 years, and the enormous impact BOOST have had on the lives of some of the most vulnerable people in our communities.

What is BOOST?

BOOST started as a two-year pilot project (2015 - 2017) under a scheme funded by DWP to test new initiatives called **Working People Working Places**.

We were keen to co-locate related services, test the connection between employment and mental health and build on the successful work of Barnet's Welfare Reform Taskforce.

BOOST started in Burnt Oak as a service for residents of Burnt Oak ward only. Our original team comprised colleagues from Barnet Homes, Barnet Council, Future Path, Jobcentre Plus and Love Burnt Oak

The original two-year pilot target was to help 250 local people into employment and we achieved 272 so it was clear from the start that the approach would be capable of delivering positive outcomes. With this in mind and with support from Council Members and senior leaders at Barnet Council BOOST was funded to continue operations beyond March 2017.

In 2017 our service was extended to another ward - Childs Hill - and we expanded the team and opened a new service from a shop at 184 Cricklewood Lane using the same co-located partnering and holistic assessment approach. The shop was completely refurbished thanks to social value contributions from Morgan Sindall Ltd one of Barnet Homes's contractor partners.

This extended availability proved to be successful so the BOOST service rolled out borough-wide in 2018. During this period we also extended outreach to South Friern Library in N10 and Probation Service.

The team's original focus was one that looked at the holistic needs of residents, and indeed the needs remain the same today:

- Tackling wider barriers to employment (such as health, housing, digital and financial inclusion)
- Income (such as support with welfare reform impact advice, better off in-work calculations, money and debt advice)
- Employability Support (support in getting someone work-ready, addressing any gaps in skills, understanding any mobility/health requirements and supporting with childcare etc.)
- Jobs (ensuring a direct link to employers and vacancies/work experience and in-work support)

Using the Manchester New Economy Model our return on investment for the pilot period was calculated at £2.78 for every £1 spent in Barnet and £5.99 for every £1 in wider benefits to the public purse.



The launch of BOOST in 2015



Our timeline

2015

- Soft launch of BOOST Burnt Oak in May. Official launch July
- Services offered include job centre staff, mental health employment coaches, youth employment support
- Target set to engage 1,000 and get 250 into employment by March 2017
- Ongoing borough-wide benefit cap support through multi agency Barnet Homes-led Taskforce
- BOOST win DWP Efficiency Award

2016

- Visits to BOOST from national policy makers to share learning
- Taskforce work with DWP on support plans for UC roll out
- Ongoing borough-wide benefit cap support through multi agency Taskforce
- Taskforce join the Domestic Violence One Stop Shop
- BOOST win Team of the Year Award



2017

- End of BOOST Burnt Oak pilot – jobs target met
- Launch of BOOST Childs Hill
- Opening of BOOST one stop shop at 184 Cricklewood Lane
- Universal Credit rolls out in Barnet
- Lawrence wins Manager of the Year award



2018

- BOOST Burnt Oak and Childs Hill teams join and offer single borough wide service
- Outreach at Probation service
- Morgan Sindall refurbish 184 through social value and venue becomes online training centre
- Welfare Benefit Adviser Liaison group set up
- Michelle wins Good Neighbour Award and BOOST win People Values award

2019

- BOOST begin outreach at South Friern library
- Begin Make it Click online training courses
- Arrange informal outreach from CAB in Burnt Oak
- BOOST service integrated into Rough Sleeper support programme
- First BOOST Partner Awards ceremony held



2020

- COVID lockdown drives services online. www.boostbarnet.org website created
- BOOST and Taskforce combine to one service
- Take on Barnet Group Apprenticeship programme
- Work with Ingeus to bring Restart programme into Burnt Oak pending Colindale move
- Nominated for Municipal Journal award

2021

- Digital Inclusion Coordinator recruited
- Recruitment partnership with NHS. Work with Public Health and Future Path to develop Sort Your Life Out training
- Set up Make it Happen on Grahame Park with CCT and NHG
- Community Innovation Funding to co-locate CAB in BOOST
- BOOST win Shaw Trust JETS delivery awards



2022

- Financial Inclusion team set up in BOOST
- Agree to co-fund CAB Adviser with NHG
- Weekly meet the Care employer sessions set up. Recruitment event held for Street Scene
- BOOST run Jobs Fair at Middlesex University - 249 people attended and 26 employers have stands
- BOOST Shortlisted for ERSA Team of the Year Award

2023

- NCL Health and Social Care Academy worker in BOOST
- Friday Jobs Club set up
- Fund CAB Adviser full time from HSF
- S106 Construction jobs brokerage service begins

2024

- Outreach weekly at The Skills Centre Edgware
- Monday Jobs Club with Barnet Mencap
- WLA Jobs Fair 211 attendees/18 employers
- Age Friendly Barnet Digital Inclusion project for Sheltered Housing
- Kelly wins Volunteer of the Year for Digital Champion work

2025

- Implement new team structure
- Move website to sit with Barnet Homes
- Co locate with Shaw Trust for new Connect to Work and Work Well provisions

Working in partnership

Over the last 10 years BOOST has worked with many partners. Our approach is always about win-win we want to help partners to reach their targets and deliver benefits for Barnet residents. Some of our partners are local groups while others are large national organisations but whatever their size we believe that working in collaboration brings key benefits:

- Enhances our range of offers to meet changing local needs
- Deliver additional services at no or low-cost bringing value for money
- Increases visits to our services and can help generate referrals

We send a big thank you to all our partners we have worked with over the last ten years here is just a sample:

- Jobcentre Plus
- Good Things Foundation
- Barnet College
- Barnet Citizens Advice
- 2econd Chance
- Public Health
- Barnet Mencap
- Love Burnt Oak
- Future Path

If you are interested in working with us, co-locating a service or need promotion for your services to our clients contact Tara Mohseni at tara.mohseni@barnethomes.org



Over the past few years, our collaboration through the Monday Job Club at Burnt Oak Library has been truly transformative. The welcoming space, dedicated team, and inclusive ethos at Boost have allowed us to create a safe, empowering, and engaging weekly hub for our participants. Many describe it as the highlight of their week, a place where they feel supported, build their confidence, develop CVs, apply for jobs, and receive practical, person-centred guidance in real time.

What makes this partnership special is how aligned our values are. Boost doesn't just open doors, they walk through them with us, offering shared expertise, resources, and employer networks that genuinely benefit our community. Thanks to this collaboration, we've hosted joint employment events and introduced learners to new industries and employers they never thought accessible.

Behind every success story we've celebrated from first interviews to first paycheques, has been a team effort. Boost has been a critical part of that team.

Congratulations on 10 years of impact, empowerment, and transformation. We're proud to be working with you, and excited for what the next decade of partnership will bring.

Zeeshan Sharif - Barnet Mencap

Working in partnership with Boost has enabled our social prescribing service to support residents more effectively and holistically. Together, we've ensured that individuals in financial hardship were referred to the Household Support Fund through Boost correctly – a vital lifeline during challenging times. This allowed us to reach residents we might not otherwise have reached and provided them much needed practical and wellbeing support.

We've also collaborated on digital inclusion work, with Boost staff and volunteers providing invaluable 1:1 support to residents in Barnet, helping them build confidence in using the NHS app and accessing online health services. We understand that our relationship with Boost is vital in continuing to support our communities and we are excited to continue working together!

Bianca Illi – Barnet Social Prescribing Service



Lawrence Graham picks up the Manager of the Year award



Local jobs for local people

3,300 people helped into work in 10 years
this is more than 1 every working day!

We have sourced candidates for local jobs
for diverse businesses covering everything
from construction to social care

Among local businesses and employers, we
have worked with

- Brent Cross
- Quinn London Ltd
- Savers
- Morrisons
- Schools
- Health & Social care companies
- YCB - Care Homes
- Barnet Homes - Apprenticeships

In 2024 we developed a new programme for
promotion of roles gained through the S106
planning process. Many are in construction,
but not all.

**61 people placed into construction
roles in 2024-25**

**8/10 people who were given in-
work support stayed in work for
three months or more**



"BOOST have been a huge support to
Quinn London's Property Services division
over the past 15 months supporting us with
finding local talent to fill vacancies across
both the Barnet Homes projects.

The support from Boost with matching
applicants with the right skills and attitude
to full fill vacant roles including Resident
Liaison Officers and customer care roles
has been incredible.

We have been very impressed with the
support during recruiting and the ongoing
support for both Quinn London and the
candidates we have placed in permanent
roles.

Lawrence and his team have always
been on hand during interviews and the
aftercare of the interview process - we have
been truly impressed with service they
have provided us with working very much
in partnership with the Quinn London team.

We have recruited 2 apprentice's roles
through the Boost service for our Barnet
Homes sites who are performing extremely
well , 3 permanent roles on our Barnet
Homes sites and 2 positions in our head
office based in Mill Hill. 7 talented local
people placed in positions locally and
adding huge value to our company.

We continue to promote any roles we have
available through Lawrence and his team
who are always on hand to offer advice and
jump on to the next recruitment drive with
us. We are so pleased that Tim at Barnet
Homes linked us with Boost at the very
beginning of our contracts with Barnet
Homes as this has been beneficial to all
involved - THANK YOU BOOST we look
forward to recruiting more of the team with
you in the future".

Lynn Woodrow
Project Coordinator



Trying something new

BOOST was originally designed as a pilot to test a new holistic employment support approach so innovation has been part of our DNA from the start. Over our 10 years we have been visited by policy and strategy leads from across government and the public sector to look at effectiveness and lessons learned to share with other projects across the country, these included, Sir Jeremy Heywood Cabinet Secretary and Duncan Selbie CEO of Public Health England. Colleagues from DWP recognised the good work of the team with an award in 2015

One of our team values is that we are not afraid to fail, as long as we learn, and over the years we have tried many new things and been asked by Barnet Council and Barnet Group colleagues to test ideas. We believe in being responsive to customers in delivering services.

Bringing in a member of the Council's School Admissions team in response to high customer demand at our reception. Taking on allocation of Household Support Fund and using it to fund a Citizens Advice service

In 2019 taking on management of The Barnet Group's apprentice programme
Winning a contract to support Ukrainian refugees working with World Jewish Relief's STEP programme

Being selected in 2024 as the only ALMO in the country to test a social housing and employment model called Jobs Plus with Learning and Work Institute



Winning the DWP Efficiency Award 2015

Providing a venue and support for innovation from partners such as the Friendly Place and Barnet Mencap Jobs Club and Sound Hub

To work on new projects with BOOST contact our External Contracts Manager Tara Mohseni
tara.mohseni@barnethomes.org



BOOST staff with Sir Duncan Selbie



BOOST staff with Sir Jeremy Heywood



Working with Barnet Council and adding value

BOOST has always worked closely with partners from across different council services to support initiatives from topical initiatives such as cost of living support to longer-term offers like food security as well as actively participating in business engagement and social services and housing.



Tara and John Bryson

"Over the past 10 years, I have followed the BOOST journey marked by your approachability, forward-thinking, and collaboration. The vibrant spaces you've created are a testament to your commitment to innovation and community engagement. Your willingness to work with community partners makes you a trusted and valued ally.

Every time we ask, David brings the team together and BOOST are there, delivering inspiring speeches and presentations, joining in activities, setting up stalls, and always representing.

From the outset, we were welcomed and supported by the BOOST staff, who were always ready to host and assist us in getting started.

I've also collaborated with David and BOOST on other projects. Showcasing our departments through online training was a learning experience for both of us, but it was met with positivity and a can-do attitude. This value is evident throughout the wider BOOST team. BOOST has also been at the forefront of demonstrating the social value and impact of their services on the wider community.

Who could forget the memorable staff awards, where tuxedos replaced the fleeces, adding a touch of elegance to our celebrations and, of course, the merch - I'm sure there isn't a desk in Barnet without a BOOST logo pen or cup. BOOST no longer stands for just supporting those in Burnt Oak but has extended its reach across the Borough, showcasing the impact of the hard work of Lawrence, and the team.

Adapting to change and making a tangible impact on Barnet residents through employment and skill development has been a significant achievement. Your dedication to empowering individuals to acquire the skills necessary to help themselves to thrive is truly inspiring.

Well done, and here's to the next 10 years!"

Claire Desouza - Prevention and Wellbeing Team Manager

BOOST as a service is particularly valuable because of our face-to-face availability for residents and our presence at venues around the borough. During the recent cost of living crisis BOOST worked closely with Council's teams to provide drop in help and advice on claiming benefits and as a result was selected as one of two external bodies able to allocate Household Support Fund. An example of added value is when BOOST worked with Prevention and Wellbeing Team Manager Claire De Souza to develop new e-learning packages for staff and partners to understand the basics in Social Care referrals and Housing and Homelessness services.

Our holistic health-oriented approach means we work closely with Public Health colleagues and the Make Every Contact Count team. BOOST take referrals from Council Tax recovery services to ensure vulnerable clients can get help to find employment and become more financially resilient.

A small selection of the Council projects BOOST has been involved in include:

- Working with Prevention and Wellbeing Team to pilot new ideas
- Food Steering Group
- Resident Experience Hub
- Childrens Centres/Locality Hubs
- Care Leavers/Onwards and Upwards
- Wellbeing Hub
- Suicide Prevention
- Creating referral pathways with Council Tax team
- Drop in support sessions set up to claim Discretionary Housing Payments



Winners at the 2018 Barnet Council awards



Apprentices

BOOST on behalf of The Barnet Group is on its fifth cohort totalling 46 apprentices, ranging from IT, HR, Regeneration, Housing, Customer Services, Income Collection, Gas Engineering, Fire & Safety, Bumblebee, Finance & Domestic Abuse, to name but a few.

The positive impact of having an apprentice in your team

The Fire and Building Safety Team have had the pleasure of two excellent apprentices over the last 2 years. Both have shown great ambition to learn, develop, and progress their skills in the professional workplace. Both apprentices integrated well with the team and have taken on challenges they should be extremely proud of including supporting residents in some very difficult and distressing situations. Both have shown great commitment to the Barnet Group core behaviours of Hungry, Humble, and People Smart and are a great asset to the organisation.

How they progressed

Oli Bloom excelled in his role as the Fire and Building Safety Team apprentice throughout 2023/2024, he used his initiative, problem solving skills, and technical mindset to help build and develop the Fire and Building Safety Team digital system, particularly around fire door surveys. He used this opportunity to support the case study required for coursework and achieved excellent results. At the end of his apprenticeship, Oli was presented with the opportunity to apply for a permanent role within the team to which he was successful. Oli is now an integral part of the Fire Door Surveying Team and is currently undertaking a qualification with the BRE to become a certified fire door surveyor.

Lyan Trendafilov joined the team as an apprentice in 2024. From the outset he showed great initiative to get to where he wanted to be by pursuing the opportunity to join the Fire & Building Safety Team after initially interviewing and successfully being offered an apprenticeship within the Gas Safety Team. Since joining the team, Lyan has been a fantastic team player who is always keen to learn, develop, and flourish. No task is too much for Lyan, who sacrificed his spare time to support residents out of hours when a major water leak occurred at one of our high-rise buildings. He supported residents by offering assurance in a very distressing situation, helped them carry bags to and from their homes, and delivered bottled water for them whilst the lifts were out of service. Lyan has also helped present key fire safety information to residents at Barnet Homes' Sheltered Schemes and been involved

Apprentice K "I thoroughly enjoyed my year-long apprenticeship in the Income Collection Team at the Barnet Group. It was an incredibly rewarding experience where I learned a great deal about the housing sector. The support I received throughout the apprenticeship was fantastic and made a difference in my personal and professional growth.

The working environment was friendly and collaborative, which made each day enjoyable and motivating. Once the apprenticeship finished, I went on to join the Contracts and compliance team, which is a new step for me. Looking back, I would recommend doing an apprenticeship at the Barnet Group to anyone looking to gain valuable experience in the Housing field, as it has been an enriching journey that has helped shape my career."



with key meetings with the London Fire Brigade and Fire Cadets.

Lyan is a great addition to the Fire & Building Safety Team and very much valued by its members.

The learning journey they had with you

Both Oli and Lyan have had the opportunity to join a fast paced and varied team which has allowed them to experience lots of different workplace challenges. They are exposed to a variety of workstreams which has helped them develop their skills across the service area, both office based and onsite. They have both shown great commitment to their learning and coursework to ensure they achieve their best results. It has been a pleasure having both apprentices within the team.

To date within the group, 88% of apprentices have passed their apprenticeships, 82% have gone straight into employment, and 72% have remained within the Group. Last year two apprentices received distinctions.

Email michael.gehr@barnethomes.org to register your interest in this year's apprenticeship programme.



BOOST staff with some of our 2021 apprentices

Digital inclusion

Since launching the Digital Inclusion programme in 2021, we've made significant strides in tackling digital poverty and improving access across the borough. Through strategic partnerships, targeted outreach, and community-focused initiatives, we've supported thousands of residents to become more digitally confident, connected, and independent.

Support & Engagement

- Over 3,000 visits to Digital Support Workshops, providing hands-on help and guidance to residents.
- 198 residents received one-to-one telephone-based digital support, allowing access for those unable to attend in person.
- Digital support extended beyond community groups and into sheltered housing schemes and hotels housing sanctuary seekers, meeting residents where they based.



Working in partnership to refurbish laptops



Working with 2second chance to refurbish devices

Devices & Connectivity

- Over 250 laptops directly gifted to residents to enable access to essential online services.
- 100 laptops and tablets distributed through our partnership with the Good Things Foundation (GTF).
- Recognised as a GTF Online Centre, providing initiatives such as free SIM cards with free calls, text messages and data.
- 159 devices (laptops, tablets, phones) gifted via our partnership with 2econd Chance, supporting sustainability and reuse of ex-corporate tech.
- 84 residents received 12 months of free Community Fibre broadband, removing cost as a barrier to connectivity.
- 400 devices sold at affordable prices at 2econd Chance/BOOST device sale events, supporting digital access for lower-income households.
- Donated over 200 laptops to 2econd Chance for refurbishment.

Training & Development

- Launched the Affordable Internet CPD-Accredited eLearning Module with Digital Unite, empowering staff to support residents in accessing low-cost internet.
- Co-developed the Inspire eLearning Module for staff, focused on embedding digital inclusion in service delivery - launching June 2025.
- Introduced a quarterly Digital Inclusion Newsletter to share updates, opportunities, and best practice.
- One of our Digital Champions was named Volunteer of the Year at the Barnet Group Community Awards, recognising their outstanding contribution.

Partnerships & Progression

- Signed the Charter for Digital Inclusion, led by the Digital Poverty Alliance, reinforcing our commitment to equitable digital access.
- Delivered an NHS App pilot in local GP surgeries, helping residents download and navigate the app to better manage their health.
- Launched work experience placements in partnership with 2econd Chance at BOOST, giving young people practical tech skills after completing digital training.
- Welcomed university interns to support the delivery of digital skills classes, helping to expand our reach and develop future talent.
- Supported apprentices to gain hands-on experience in digital support roles, several of whom have since progressed into paid employment.



Financial inclusion

BOOST'S financial inclusion offer comprises the provision of a dedicated Welfare Benefits Advice service, drop-in sessions to help with grant claims, particularly Discretionary Housing Payments and hosting various partners at our offices such as Citizens Advice and BeLifted. Improving the financial well-being of Barnet residents has been especially important during the recent cost-of-living crisis and is part of the holistic offer for our job seekers.

One of the most useful tools that our advisers use is the Council's Financial Calculator that enables them to help maximise client income - try it for yourself at <https://www.barnet.gov.uk/benefits-grants-and-financial-advice/debt-and-money-advice/financial-calculator>.



BOOST supplying warm packs

"BOOST do amazing work in supporting residents in need and it was good to see firsthand how you do this. I'd like to commend you personally for your excellence in the delivery of the HSF and look forward to many more collaborations. I was especially inspired by the creative work around supporting homeless people in Barnet.

I wanted to express my gratitude to have been working with Milena and Boost team on the Household Support Fund in the last year. They have provided support to over 2000 Barnet residents helping with payments towards rent, energy and water bills, household appliances and many other.

Milena has always been very creative in the way she works, trying to reach out to as many people in need as possible. This would include those who have been affected by the cost-of-living crisis, people who lost their jobs and/or people touched by homelessness or trying to rebuild their lives following domestic abuse.

She worked closely with charity organisations to find best ways to support our residents and set up a few key projects that truly changed peoples' lives. During winter, Milena put together "Winter Packs" which contained, tea/coffee sachets, warm blankets and hats, personal wash kits, etc.

She was able to purchase Samsung tablets at very competitive rate, which then were used to help people to get back into employment. These are just a couple of examples of her excellent work and innovative thinking.

Of course, none of it would be possible without her dedicated team who are there daily answering calls, providing advice to residents and processing applications.

Along with my colleague I visited Boost few months ago where we were able to see the amazing work they are all doing. We've heard many positive stories and seen the impact of the support provided.

It's been a pleasure working with Milena and the Boost team for the past year and I hope we can continue our collaboration in the foreseeable future".

Winning contracts

Since 2015 more than £3m has been gained by BOOST and brought into Barnet to supplement local spending. Under these contracts the team have achieved 1210 job outcomes which break down as follows:

Core funded BOOST outcomes - 2187

External funded job outcomes: 1210

JETS (Jobs Entry Targeted Support) Funded by Shaw Trust - 876

ESF Borough Employment Support Service (European Social Fund) Funded by GLA / WLA -115

UKSPF (UK Shared Prosperity Fund) Funded by WLA - 62

STEP (Specialist Training Employment Programme for Ukrainian refugees funded by World Jewish Relief -147

JOBS PLUS - Funded by Learning and Work Institute -10

World Jewish Relief has partnered with the Barnet Group since early 2023 supporting refugees and forced migrants into employment through our Specialist Employment and Training Programme (STEP). Via dedicated Employment Advisors hosted at Boost, together we have supported over 500 individuals. According to a recent survey more than 65% of participants found work.

With offices in Child's Hill, World Jewish Relief is proud to be part of the ecosystem supporting refugees across Barnet and our partnership with the Barnet Group allows us to work directly with local residents".

Alex Brookes, Deputy Director - UK Programmes, World Jewish Relief



In 2024/2025 our external contracts were worth more than £1million

Out and about

Key to the delivery of our services has been outreach and events around the borough - delivering service from community locations such as:

- MTVH/West Hendon Community Hub
- The Skills Centre in Edgware
- Chipping Barnet Library/Food Bank
- East Finchley Library/Food Bank
- 184 Cricklewood Lane
- Hendon and Barnet Job Centres
- Barnet & Southgate College
- Middlesex University
- Brent Cross Shopping Centre
- Grahame Park/Colindale Communities Trust
- Colindale/Ingeus Restart
- Hope Corner, EN4
- One Stonegrove, Edgware
- Love Burnt Oak
- St Barnabas Food Bank

"Our partnership with BOOST Barnet is a vital part of the wraparound support we offer at Chipping Barnet Foodbank. By hosting regular BOOST drop-in sessions on site, we're able to give clients immediate access to employment and benefits advice, which can be life changing. One of our clients, who came to us in crisis with no stable accommodation or income, was supported by BOOST Barnet into secure employment and is now living independently. It's a powerful example of how collaborative and face-to-face support can help people rebuild their lives and take meaningful steps toward long-term independence."

Chipping Barnet Food Bank



The team celebrating at the 2018 Barnet Stars awards

Client A - A Case Study on the Importance of Face-to-face Engagement with Support Services in Foodbanks

Client A first visited Chipping Barnet Foodbank (CBFB) in Quarter 4 of 2024.

Troublesome circumstances in the West Indies involved Client A coming to the UK without many possessions and having to take up residence, on an emergency basis, at a family member's flat in the borough. She was effectively "sofa-surfing" with no possessions or any formal support.

Client A was referred to CBFB to receive emergency food.

While at the food bank, Client A was alerted to the wrap-around-service provided by CBFB. She was keen to get what financial support she was entitled to and get into work to become independent. She was signposted to the next drop-in session for BOOST Barnet hosted at CBFB.

Client A turned up for the drop-in and learned about the support she could access as well as view some of the jobs available, including the Section 106 construction jobs reserved for Barnet borough residents. She applied for a construction job and was successful in her application.

3 months later BOOST Barnet reported back to CBFB that she was still employed at the construction site and was about to move into a flat of her own on the first of March 2025. The flat is local to her family and place of work.

This is a story of an amazing turnaround in the context of some difficult circumstances and facilitated and mediated via effective face-to-face and coordinated wrap-around support agencies working in a partnership in Client A's best interests.



BOOST and Barnet Group staff at the Middlesex Job Fair

People of BOOST



The BOOST team in 2025

BOOST Manager Lawrence Graham shares the stories of some of our people

Stella - Formerly an apprentice in the first cohort that BOOST did in their new role of managing the apprenticeship programme for Barnet Homes/The Barnet Group. Stella started her apprenticeship, not long after leaving school, she hit the ground running very fast and was always one that would help everyone in the group if they were finding things difficult. She passed with flying colours and was offered to stay on. She has continuously developed and has been flexible, doing many different roles. She has now started a new job as the Brokerage Lead; and even though it is early days she is showing great potential and looks like she is very keen to make a good go at making it a great success. Thank you, Stella, for being so flexible over the years and I am sure that you will do amazing in your new role.

James - James was part of the original BOOST set-up and helped to launch the project in 2015. James was originally a Triage and Engagement officer, then becoming a Housing Support Officer. Through all the changes over the years he has gone full circle and is now an Employment Adviser. The journey has been difficult and he has had challenges along the way, but he is still with us helping local people everyday trying to return to work and have better lives.

Milena - Milena started with us a few years back as part of the Housing Options Rough Sleeper's team who funded us to employ 2 employment advisers to work with Eastern European nationals. The work that she did along with her colleague was amazing based on the outcomes achieved. They helped some into employment, helped some with getting settled and pre-settled status, and helping return home for some. After the funding came to an end, we had a post available for a Financial Inclusion Manager, Milena applied and was successful and did a great job including the management of the Household Support Fund, which has helped to support many Barnet residents. Milena has now secured a new role as the Core Employment & Financial Resilience Team Manager. And is looking forward to her new role and what challenges it brings along the way.



Andrew – Andrew is another member of the team that started before me as a Progression Coach for Future-Path When Future Path came to an end Andrew moved over to BOOST and continued to support his clients into employment. Recently we had the opportunity to deliver a new project in East Finchley for which we needed a project manager. Andrew applied for the role and was successful and is now managing a small team which includes Advisers, Admin and partners from other organisations. We hope that this project continues for many years to come and well done to Andrew for stepping up and taking on this challenge.

Tara – A former client of BOOST who came to access our services after we expanded into the Cricklewood area. Before Tara started we had a team that had been set up to deliver this new local offer, but things didn't work out so we had to start again and when we were looking for staff for this location Tara seemed like a great choice. She started as an Adviser and within a very short time was giving the opportunity to manage the location and did an amazing job. Tara moved on to become Project Manager for our externally funded ESF and UKSPF (UK Shared Prosperity Fund) contracts and has delivered some amazing outcomes putting Barnet up there at the top within all the West London boroughs.

She has now taken on the role of Employment Contracts manager which will help us continue to gain external funding to keep us supporting as many people as possible. Tara is excited but also nervous of this new challenge but with mine and the teams support I'm sure she will do a great job.

Michael G – A previous client who came through BOOST, during the time of the COVID pandemic Michael was one of many who had been hit by this disaster. At this time, we had secured funding for JETS (Jobs Entry Targeted Support) programme which was designed to help people back into work who had been affected. Michael at the time seemed like a very good fit with all his transferable skills to be recruited for one of the roles as an Employment Adviser on the JETS programme. From when he first started, he has been a great addition to the team and has since moved on to become a youth employment advisor and to now be managing the Barnet Group Apprenticeship Programme, along side managing a case load of 18-30-year-olds across the borough.

For 2 Years now Michael has been our top performing adviser helping 134 residents into paid employment or Apprenticeships. Michaels long term goal is to expand and progress that apprenticeship programme along with joining it up with the Council's programme. Well done on your journey with us so far, I'm sure that you will continue to do amazing things with the young cohort and make our apprenticeship programme very successful

Michael A – Another member of the team that came to us for help and was supported by Andrew who was able to help Michael with his confidence and give him that push to help him secure a role within BOOST as an Employment Adviser. Initially he worked in the core team, then was given the opportunity to support the Make It Happen Project in Grahame Park. Michael helped deliver courses, and support residents with all types of needs. He then came back into BOOST and has now moved forward onto our Jobs Plus project which we deliver in East Finchley.

Michael thank you for all that you contributed and keep going - remember you are great.

Genevieve – Genevieve came to BOOST whilst I was still a Progression Coach for Future-Path. Gen was finding it difficult to bring herself to apply for jobs but I do remember that her and her friend kept coming in asking for help and over time we became very familiar with each other and I recommended that she do an apprenticeship. Genevieve applied and had interview support and gained an apprenticeship. It didn't end there. The first placement did not work out so we supported Gen into finishing her apprenticeship and she passed with flying colours. A short while later we had a job opportunity come up and she applied and was successful. Ever since then she has been working her magic and has helped many residents secure paid jobs/apprenticeships. Gen has a certain passion about her which makes her who she is, and she should never lose that as that is what makes her the amazing person she is.

Oksana – Oksana came to the UK during the war in the Ukraine. I had been working with external organisations such as World Jewish Relief, to support Ukrainian refugees in the borough (Barnet had one of the largest intakes). As we were already doing this and had the relationship I managed to secure additional funding to take on a Support Worker who needed to speak Ukrainian, after interviewing a few candidates Oksana was successful, and has gone on to help many refugees into employment and begin new lives in the UK. Oksana has now moved on to become a BOOST Employment Adviser continuing to

support refugees as well as other residents and is improving everyday with her language and knowledge, thank you for all that you do Oksana, also I have to admire the fact that you have come from a very difficult place in your life but have made many positives and have started a new life I wish you all the success in your continued journey with us and any other things you do in the future.

Lawrence – I came to BOOST after being out of work for many years (seven to be exact) I came across an organisation called Future-Path who I found by being at a coffee morning at my daughter's school. They helped me sort out my CV after I had tried applying for many jobs. I previously had my own business, but it seemed to be very difficult getting an interview. I was offered an interview with Barnet Homes as a Housing Support Officer, but was unsuccessful, as I didn't have enough experience or knowledge of the welfare system. I was then offered a job with Future-Path who were helping me and started at the very bottom as an Admin Assistant I needed an opportunity to get a foot in the door somewhere, so I took this role and very soon after 2 or 3 months I was offered the opportunity to cover another member in my team who was going on maternity leave, working as a Progression Coach, in Burnt Oak with BOOST. A few months later after being very successful in my role I was offered a secondment to be the BOOST Team Manager. I was even nominated and won an award in 2017 as Manager of the Year for Barnet Council, this was something I never expected to achieve but I worked hard and had many role models and mentors around me that made this happen. In 2017 BOOST expanded to 184 Cricklewood Lane and was given the opportunity to manage this team as well as Burnt Oak which I was delighted to do and we continued to be successful and now we cover the whole of Barnet. My journey is now more than 9 years, and I keep learning and enjoy every moment of helping team members grow move on to other jobs both internal and external. My goal is to leave a legacy when I move on and make sure that BOOST keeps going for many years to come. One thing I will say to anyone that says they can't achieve anything is even if you come from troubled times as I did and don't believe in yourself one day when you least expect it someone give you an opportunity, take that opportunity you will be surprised how much you can do when you really want it, I now have turned my life around and see that so many others that I have come into contact with through work have. All you need to do is have belief that there is a light at the end of that tunnel never give up I DIDN'T look at me now.



Lawrence Graham and David Thomas

What BOOST people said...

"I joined the UKSPF programme at BOOST almost 16 months ago. I've found not only a supportive environment but also the opportunity to grow professionally. I've developed vital skills particularly in client communication and have noticed a huge improvement in my Excel skills. I have also achieved an Information, Advice and Guidance qualification.

The BOOST Team value "no-one left behind, we help everyone regardless of difficulty" really attracted me to BOOST and it is truly lived out every day by the team, both in their interactions with each other and in their dedication to clients" - Abbie Jackson

"I joined Boost on temporary basis agency staff November 2020 and was made full time in May 2022.

I work within a good team here at Boost and help clients whose needs can be down to vulnerability and overcoming language barriers. I assist residents with DHP and Housing Benefit and Council tax enquiries and in June 2024 I moved onto the employment side of Boost assisting clients to find employment and helping with their CV's" - Antony Jones

"This Apprenticeship role has truly helped me grow, and I've learned so much from everyone.

I wanted to share my thoughts on what makes my role in client success so rewarding. This job is fulfilling in so many ways, but one aspect stands out: the joy I feel when a client secures a job and expresses their gratitude for my assistance. Knowing that my efforts have directly contributed to someone's success is incredibly gratifying. The appreciation clients show when they've received a job offer is truly touching and reinforces the importance of the work we do. It's a privilege to be a part of their journey and this journey with Boost and to witness their achievements.

What I admire most about BOOST is the collective effort and commitment of everyone involved, aligned with the company's core values. What stands out to me is how each person's role contributes to helping others" - Anjana Sekhon

**"I started working with Welfare Reform Task Force in 2013 as an agency worker before that I was working as an Income and Welfare Rights BOOST manager for a charity in Lewisham
My favourite thing about BOOST is that we support clients as a team. If the client needs to see more than one person in the team; that gets arranged and, in the end, clients get best outcome of our service.**

My best client success was when a client had received final eviction notice due to high rent and high Council Tax arrears. It was a family of 4 and Mother was diagnosed with terminal cancer and the eldest child was missing school as he was trying to provide care for his mother. I made a claim for PIP and liaised with the GP. I completed a DHP form and worked with Council's DHP team as an urgent case. Advised husband to apply for Carers Allowance and the child to go back to full time education. I contacted Children's services to be in touch with family to support them during this difficult time. Before the client arrived home I received a phone call from DHP team telling him that his rent and Council Tax arrears were cleared

During my time with BOOST I have seen that the support from the employment team is a great service that helps clients to become more financially independent" - Florinda Gjergjaj

Get in touch or work with us

How Can BOOST Help You?

Whether you're a job seeker, an employer, or a partner, we're here to support you.

- Employment Support Referrals: barnethomes.org/boost/boost-contact-form
- General Enquiries: boost@barnet.gov.uk
- Stay Informed: Subscribe to Our Newsletter: barnethomes.org/boost
- External Contract Opportunities: tara.mohseni@barnethomes.org / Lawrence.graham@barnethomes.org



Pictured: the BOOST team do their bit for the community at Meadowside Care Home