



# A FAIR AND GREEN RECOVERY

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## A fair and green recovery

Groundwork was founded during the global recession of the early 1980s with a mission to help communities cope with social and economic change through practical, neighbourhood-based action.

Through our projects, programmes and expert services we help people improve their quality of life and their future prospects, building the strength and resilience of whole communities.

The Covid-19 pandemic is laying bare the extent of inequality and injustice in our society as it becomes obvious that those being worst affected by the crisis are those currently most disadvantaged. They will also find it the hardest to rebuild in the aftermath.

- Vulnerable or isolated people will emerge from the lockdown in worse physical and mental health.
- Young people already out of work will be at the back of the queue as the economy recovers.
- Many local community groups who have been working so hard to support others in their area will struggle to survive in the face of rising demand and lower income.

The past few months have also highlighted the things that make a difference to our physical health and mental wellbeing – connections with friends and neighbours, a walk in the park, fresh air and healthy food, access to technology. While many of us take these for granted, many others are disconnected from this essential social infrastructure.

# Never more needed

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We are stepping up our activities to respond to this new national crisis and are ready to work in partnership with local authorities, businesses and other civil society organisations to help local areas recover and rebuild. This is when our work to support people in hardship, combat isolation and build stronger, more integrated communities will be needed more than ever.

We have already adapted our approach and repurposed our resources so that we can support people through the crisis – coordinating community volunteering efforts, providing telephone and online help and distributing emergency grant funds.

As lockdown eases we need to help people adapt to a new reality while continuing to provide reassurance and support to those who will be feeling anxious or who may feel safer in isolation due to underlying health conditions.

We also want to make it a green recovery, ensuring everyone has access to the environmental assets that have been so precious during lockdown and applying the lessons of the pandemic to our fight against climate change and environmental injustice.

# 1

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## Rebuilding sustainable communities

Volunteers and local organisations will be essential to rebuilding communities after the crisis. However, many rely on the income they raise through fundraising events and are worried about the future. Groups need help to cope with disruption to their services and change how they offer support to meet new and increased demands.

Our Community Enablers provide practical, expert support to local groups to help them access funds, recruit volunteers and deliver their projects. We want to help more grassroots groups adapt so that they can drive the recovery in local neighbourhoods and prepare for future emergencies.

We also want to help communities use this opportunity to change their lifestyles for good – finding healthier ways to travel, reconnecting with nature, growing food and committing to regular volunteering.



## GROW @THE GRANGE, BLACKPOOL

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Groundwork manages the @theGrange community centre. It is a vital and thriving community hub in an area ranked in the 10% most deprived in England. It has a shop, cafe, library, community garden and clubs for people in the local area.

During the Covid-19 lockdown its volunteers grew fresh produce and delivered food packages to vulnerable residents. Staff also switched to online tools to connect people at risk of social isolation.

# 2

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## Supporting young people

The shutdown has hit young people particularly hard – unable to meet friends, having their education disrupted and fearful for their jobs. In previous economic recessions youth unemployment has risen sharply with devastating effects on the life chances and mental health of a generation.

Our youth workers continue to help young people navigate their way through the crisis, providing the emotional support and coaching that will help them re-integrate into education or build their confidence and networks outside of school through community-based social action.

Our Green Teams help young people learn practical work skills in a supportive environment while improving and maintaining green spaces in their local community. Restrictions on our movement have made us realise how essential these spaces are to our health and wellbeing and we know many will be in dire need of upkeep and improvement during the recovery phase.

## PECKHAM STUDIOS, LONDON

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Groundwork's youth workers in Peckham have created a professional recording studio to cultivate the talent of local young people. It provides a safe and inspiring space to help them take their first steps into a career in music.



# 3

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## **Helping those who are isolated and in hardship**

For many people social isolation is nothing new and loneliness is now recognised as a major contributor to poor mental health. Those who were vulnerable or living in hardship before the crisis will need more support than ever in managing their bills, household finances and benefits as we count the cost of the shutdown.

Our Green Doctors help people keep on top of their bills and provide a vital lifeline to those living in isolation. Through home visits and remote support we help people save energy and water to reduce their outgoings while accessing additional financial help so that they can stay warm and well.

Our diverse local community projects also provide a focus for bringing people together and supporting those who may feel marginalised – older people living with long-term health conditions, young families coping with holiday hunger or refugees struggling to integrate into their local community.



## FANCY A BREW, BIRMINGHAM

Groundwork's Community Enablers have brought together residents of two city centre tower blocks for a regular cuppa. Many had never met before despite being neighbours for years.

Some, like Pete, have stepped up to become community champions for their block to keep people talking and improving where they live.



# Working together

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Groundwork is a federation of charities promoting practical community action on poverty and the environment across the UK.



We have strong and longstanding links with local authorities and can help councils mobilise community action to support their recovery planning.



We work with businesses large and small to help them play a more active role in promoting wellbeing and sustainability among their colleagues, customers and local communities.



We have teams experienced at working with devolved assemblies and Metro Mayors to plan major initiatives and build cross-sector partnerships.



Through our national charity Groundwork UK we can help businesses and public bodies devise programmes and campaigns that support local community action within a clear national framework.

# Our approach is informed by our strategic commitments.



**We will invest in the places and people that need us most** – prioritising our resources to bring about lasting change by building skills and capacity within the local communities where we can make the most difference.

**We will work with local leaders and listen to local voices** – ensuring our work is shaped by those it is designed to benefit and adds value to the assets that exist in local areas.

**We will grow a culture of equity and inclusion** – operating transparently and with integrity and seeking out a diversity of viewpoints, both in the work we do and the people we employ.

**We will be committed to collaboration** – forging strong partnerships, contributing to a thriving community sector and helping others lead where this will achieve greater impact.

**We will act as environmental exemplars** – championing practical action to combat the climate and nature emergency and measuring and reducing our own environmental impact.

The Covid-19 crisis has been referred to as a wake-up call, which demands a moment of national 're-set'. If we're going to build back better, then we need a recovery plan that has equity and sustainability at its heart, and that builds on the power and passion that exists in local communities.

As an organisation forged in a period of economic and social challenge, we know that this will take strong partnerships, creativity and commitment. A fair and green recovery is possible if we think globally and act locally.

# CONTACT US

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