

## It's Our Turn: Summary of Findings



The one-year project between partners Real, ICM Foundation CIC, On Our Radar and the Bromley by Bow Centre facilitated co-produced understandings and solutions to challenges of loneliness for Disabled people.

**13 community reporters were trained to ask peers about their experience of connection and loneliness.** Through the community reporting phase, five barriers to connection were highlighted: feeling excluded in social situations, transport and financial, reliance on carers and organisations, and people not understanding disability.

**Four categories of ideas emerged** as responses to these concerns: activities, systems to build connection, online resources and the development of new inclusive spaces.

**Six community concepts were tested** and attracted 184 attendances across 30 sessions

**Participants reported improvements in a sense of connection, confidence and wellbeing.** Project elements such as facilitating choice, encouragement and safety, building skills of acceptance and self-knowledge, trying new opportunities and establishing new platforms for social interactions were linked to the development of these outcomes. The biggest change for participants was in feeling part of their community and in feeling like they have a say in local services.

**The community concepts have been effective in connecting participants.** The effect of partnership working and joint events has developed participants' networks and deepened their project experience.

**The project is now at a point where it could build momentum:** a modest investment could scale the trialled activities and use the benefits of the existing partnership. Learning from the project and the partnership which has developed between organisations and Disabled people have the potential to support critical structural decisions which impact Disabled people and their relationships.

*"They told me their stories, so I had to tell them mine."*

*"There have been meaningful connections made."*

*"I can't thank them enough... Because I improved the confidence, someone asked me to volunteer at a play scheme. They asked me three years ago and I said no. Because I got the confidence, I can say yes, I can do it, because I have my confidence."*

*"Everyone got to meet up. That was good, being amongst friends, as I am in a wheelchair at the moment, it's a big change and I'm getting used to things."*

*"It just brings ideas and confidence out of me."*

*"Seeing people's stories lifted me."*