

Merger FAQs

1. What does this mean for service users?

Very little will change initially for service users. However, in the medium to long-term we are passionate about the merger bringing new opportunities for our 60,000 service users. It will increase our Scope. Catch22 works across five hubs (see 'what does Catch22 do' below) and as a result of the merger we will be opening up these hubs to Community Links' service users in a way that we haven't done before. We are hosting several focus groups with service users to brief them on these exciting developments and get their vital input in to how we can make the most of the merger.

2. Will Community Links still be an independent charity?

Once the merger takes place, Community Links will cease to be an independent charity. On 1st February 2021 all Community Links' assets, liabilities and staff will be transferred to Catch22. Community Links will remain as a 'shell entity', registered with the Charity Commission and Companies House, for as long as it reasonably takes for all contracts and leases to be transferred to Catch22 and for all banking and insurance details to be updated.

It is equally important to note Community Links' brand (our name, logo etc.) and history established over 40 years will continue after the merger, as will our commitment (through our mission) to the community and to sharing local lessons to influence wider policy.

3. Will the merger lead to cost savings and efficiencies?

Yes, the merger will lead to cost savings and greater efficiencies for our work, hence greater Sustainability is one of the drivers of the merger. Currently, two separate organisations mean two sets of financial audits, annual accounts, payrolls, policies and so on. Merging with Catch22 will help reduce our overheads and administrative burden which means more funds can be directed towards our frontline delivery. However, it is important not to forget our other drivers for the merger around Scope and Scale.

4. I am a Community Links donor or funder, should I continue to support the charity?

While one of the benefits of the merger is Sustainability, Community Links needs your continued support now more than ever. There will continue to be a ring-fenced Community Links team within Catch22 and we will continue to have responsibility for raising the much needed funding to maintain and develop our important work. All donations and funds given to Community Links, will be designated for the work of Community Links. This work is needed more than ever due to the increased demand caused by Covid-19. An update on how Community Links has been responding to

the need and our plans ahead is available on our website and via our e-newsletter. If you have any further questions, please get in touch via merger@community-links.org

5. I work in partnership with Community Links (as a partner organisation or consultant), what should I do?

All organisations and individuals that are in a contractual partnership with Community Links will have received a letter notifying them of the merger. Your dedicated account manager or point of contact will be in touch with you about reassigning contracts from Community Links to Catch22. If you have any concerns, please get in touch via merger@community-links.org.

6. What does Catch22 do as a charity?

Catch22 designs and delivers services that build resilience and aspiration in people of all ages and within communities across the UK. Catch22 works across five main hubs: Justice, Education, Vocational Training and Employability, Young People and Families, and the National Citizenship Service (NCS), supporting upwards of 100,000 service users each year. More detail can be found at www.catch-22.org.uk.

7. What does Catch22 being the 'sole member' of Community Links since January 2017 mean?

Charity members have the right to appoint trustees to manage the organisation. Although the two organisations have been separate, Community Links and Catch22 share a number of Board members who sit on both Boards. Catch22 becoming the sole member of Community Links in January 2017 reflected the organisations' similar objectives.

8. What will happen to the Community Links Board of Trustees?

The Community Links Board of Trustees will be dissolved on the transfer date of 1st February 2021. A small number of Board members will move to the Advisory Committee as an interim measure. The Board of Trustees took independent legal advice in coming to a decision around the merger.

9. What is the role of the new Community Links Advisory Committee?

The unremunerated Advisory Committee is tasked with safeguarding the legacy and future of Community Links. It will be made up of people from all walks of life with an interest in Newham and East London and a passion for Community Links and its work positively shaping the lives of our service users for the better. Detailed Terms of Reference and guidance about how to apply to the

Advisory Committee will be made available on Community Links' website in December. To ensure that the Advisory Committee has enough members to get started, some members of the Community Links Board will move across to the Community Links Advisory Committee as an interim measure.

10. What does this mean for staff?

Community Links staff will be transferred by TUPE¹, which are the regulations designed to protect the rights of employees in a transfer situation enabling them to enjoy the benefits of the same terms and conditions of their employment contract, with continuity of employment, as they were on prior to the transfer date. This means that although Community Links staff will become Catch22 employees from the date of the transfer (1st February 2021), all their contractual terms around annual leave, maternity/paternity etc will remain the same.

Sessional staff will be required to sign new contracts, on the same terms and rates of pay.

11. What will happen to Links Event Solutions (LES)

Links Event Solutions (LES) will also be transferred from Community Links to Catch22 as part of the merger. LES is a wholly owned trading arm which gifts its profits back to Community Links (<https://www.linkseventsolutions.org>). Like many events businesses, LES has been adversely affected by the business downturn caused by the Covid 19 pandemic. As part of the merger discussions, the Board of Community Links took the decision to back LES in the expectation that it will return to profitability when business conditions are more favourable. Thus, it is expected that LES will once again provide invaluable support for the work of Community Links, as it has done over many years.

12. What does this mean for the charity's main Centre at 105 Barking Road, and Asta Community Hub in Silvertown and Rokeby Community Hub in Stratford?

All three buildings will continue to serve their charitable purposes. We are liaising with the Council to reassign the leases from Community Links to Catch22. Our exciting work building a recording studio for our youth, community and policy programmes at 105 Barking Road illustrates our commitment to future development and we will continue to use our sites for the benefit of Newham residents.

13. What will happen to Community Links' financial reserves?

Any reserves, both restricted and unrestricted, will be transferred to Catch22 and designated for the purpose in which they were intended when given to Community Links. This means they will be spent as planned on Community Links programmes of work.

¹ TUPE (pronounced chew-pea) refers to the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 (as amended), which is the main piece of legislation governing the transfer of an undertaking, or part of one, to another entity.

14. Why has the Community Links Board decided to take this step now?

Since entering a strategic partnership in January 2017, both organisations have been taking steps to integrate gradually. The impact of Covid-19 has accelerated integration given the pressure on existing funds and the increased need for our programmes, services and policy work. This has meant that ensuring the Sustainability of Community Links' work is of the utmost importance. Furthermore, we are excited by the opportunity this provides to Scale the impact of the community approach of Community Links, for the benefit of service users and funders alike.

15. Will I be able to provide feedback on the merger?

Yes, we welcome feedback from all stakeholders. Please get in touch via merger@community-links.org.