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# Chinese Community Organisations in the UK

Changing Landscape, Challenges and Strategies  
for the Future

**A community research report**

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Editorial Board: Merlene Emerson MBE and Dr Lisa Yeung-Donaldson



## Foreword

For over 30 years, Chinese community organisations have been helping the most vulnerable members of all ages in their local community around the UK. Since 2008, their operation has come under immense financial strain as the economic squeeze continues to put pressure on their ability to maintain sustainable services. Chinese Welfare Trust as a leading voice of the Chinese community has commissioned a timely and much-needed piece of research to assess the impact that dwindling public resources has had on community organisations, the existence of which are considered by many as vital to our civil society. Through interviews with long-serving community leaders, we can clearly hear their aspiration and resolve to overcome challenges as they try to find ways to navigate a brighter future. This report is a call to positive action, as Chinese community centres across the UK come together and collectively forge a path forward with a mission to deliver services that better meet the needs of their users. I commend the achievement of this report.

Tom McNally  
Rt. Hon. Lord McNally  
*February 2019*

This report was formally launched at a forum organised by Chinese Welfare Trust in the House of Lords on 20 February 2019.

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## Executive Summary

This report aims to document the changes and coping mechanisms experienced by Chinese community organisations in the last ten years. Based on information gathered from key informants in 14 Chinese community organisations in four major UK cities - London, Manchester, Birmingham and Liverpool - long-serving community leaders and managers shared their insights on adapting to meet changing demands and possible solutions for improving service viability and long term sustainability.

There have been demographic changes since Chinese community organisations were first established in the 1980s.

- a) Three notable demographic trends are developing across all Chinese community centres: ageing membership, who are predominantly Cantonese-speaking, and an increasing number of Mandarin-speaking users, as well as growing numbers of British born second and third generation Chinese.
- b) Cantonese, Mandarin and English speakers have difficulty mingling with each other, as their social backgrounds and aspirations are not the same. In a similar vein, recently-formed community organisations set up by migrants from Mainland China have little interaction with the more established UK Chinese community.
- c) Some community centres have managed to attract a rising number of non-Chinese service users, mainly for cultural and recreation programmes.

The practice of funding community groups has changed. There has been a sharp decrease in funding from local authorities. Some community organisations have seen financial support from local councils drop to 20% in three years; in some cases, all support was withdrawn. Project-based funding, which are often short term, has largely replaced the block grants that community organisations used to receive. This has a negative impact on the range of services provided, staff recruitment/retention and the long term sustainability of Chinese community organisations. Although small grants are still available, mainly from foundations and trusts, smaller groups are encouraged to establish larger consortia or to form partnerships with larger voluntary organisations to bid for contracts and share out resources.

The changes in demographics and funding policies have considerable impact on service provision levels, such as:

- a) The increasing demand for culturally sensitive day care and home care services among older Chinese population far outstrips supply. This is compounded by the chronic shortage of bi-lingual care workers.
- b) Translation and interpretation services remain indispensable to older Chinese and new immigrants, which are often linked with other areas of service like general advice and advocacy.

- c) Unpaid carers have been plugging service gaps left by the underfunded social care sector. They need recognition and support in carrying out their role to avoid burnout.
- d) More emphasis has been placed on providing health-related and recreational activities to tackle social isolation and enhance well-being. Mental health support has been identified as an emerging area of service, as well as advice and support for mainland Chinese students.
- e) General advice services and luncheon clubs are underfunded. The demands for the services are consistently high owing to ageing membership and the lack of language skills among traditional and new users. In recognition of the vital difference these services make to the most vulnerable members, some centres are self-financing the services.

Chinese community organisations have been adapting to the challenges. Some have cut down on service provisions to focus primarily on self-financing social and recreational activities. Some have decided to specialise, especially in providing elderly care services, whilst others have taken a broader approach to continue providing a range of services from health and mental health to elderly support, carers support, education and other services. Whichever strategic development path Chinese community organisations choose to take the lessons learned from the 14 organisations that took part in this research are:

- a) Diversify and develop new income streams. These include setting up social enterprises, charging modest amounts for some services, renting out rooms/halls and bidding for service contracts as part of a consortium, as well as continuing to apply for small grants support from trusts and foundations, seeking sponsorships from businesses and encouraging philanthropy.
- b) Improve management and service quality to be competitive, as well as to be attractive to donors and potential corporate sponsors. Recruit younger professionals and retirees to join management boards. Ensure Board members are diverse, committed and have a range of skills.
- c) Many services are supported by volunteers to keep cost low, such as luncheon clubs, home visits, advice and recreation activities. Further strengthen human resource capacity by recruiting and training skilled volunteers.
- d) Integrate Cantonese and Mandarin speaking service users to promote Chinese community cohesion. Introduce new activities and programme to attract new service users, particularly younger retirees, Mandarin speakers and non-Chinese local people.
- e) Re-brand Chinese community organisations to appeal more broadly to other communities, promote social integration and open opportunities to access new funding streams. Actively forge working partnerships with other Chinese/non-Chinese community groups or like-minded organisations and raise the profile of UK Chinese by increasing level of participation in the public sphere, locally and nationally.

## 1. Introduction

Chinese community organisations have traditionally played the role of “mediator” or “bridge” between disadvantaged Chinese groups and the public services. Many of the existing Chinese community centres were established in the 1980s. At that time, the services offered by these organisations were mainly about information and advice, advocacy, as well as translation and interpretation due to the poor English skills of Chinese immigrants. The demographics of the Chinese population in Britain are however changing in three ways.

Firstly, although the large majority of Chinese people are Cantonese speakers from Hong Kong, there are also people from Vietnam, Singapore, Malaysia and, increasingly in recent years, Mainland China. Secondly, the early migrants from Hong Kong are ageing and their ability to access and use mainstream health and social care services are constrained by their language deficiency. Thirdly, the second and third generations who were born and educated in the UK generally do not have any language problems, but their aspirations and challenges are different. Likewise, new immigrants from Mainland China are generally younger, have better English proficiency and different needs.

Hence, there is a question of whether the Chinese community organisations are still relevant and delivering appropriate services. It is a critical time for Chinese community organisations in the UK, as they try to adapt to the changing needs of service users with limited resources. This report is based on a research study carried out in the early part of 2018 with key informants of 14 community centres and organisations in 4 cities - London, Manchester, Liverpool and Birmingham.

The aims of the study are to:

- i. Understand the needs of the changing Chinese population and the support provided by these centres.
- ii. Document the challenges facing the Chinese community organisations, their ways of coping with the challenges and their plans to meet those challenges.
- iii. Explore possible solutions for the future development of Chinese community organisations and how they might adapt to remain sustainable and relevant to the changing needs of the Chinese community.

This report presents the main findings of the study by outlining the origin of Chinese diaspora population in the UK and the changes in the past 10 years which create challenges for the existing Chinese community organisations. The report then focuses on how the Chinese community organisations cope with the difficulties and concludes with suggestions that may enable Chinese community organisations to adapt and further develop in the future.



## 2. Research Methodology

The study used a range of methods including:

- Review of previous research on Chinese migrant history and patterns, the older population, health needs and use of services.
- Review of the existing data on the Chinese population in the UK (2011 Census and other data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS))
- Semi-structured face-to-face interviews with key informants and volunteers in the Chinese community centres

In total, 14 centres and organisations responded to the research. Thirteen of them are registered charities and one a voluntary group that is acknowledged by the local council. All 14 centres and organisations have a physical site, some in rented premises and some own their property. In addition, 3 of the centres run Chinese schools. A list of the centres and organisations participating in this study is contained in Annex A.

Face-to-face interviews were undertaken at 9 Chinese community centres in London, 2 in Manchester, 1 in Birmingham and 1 in Liverpool between February and April 2018. The interviewees were the leaders, managers and members of the Chinese community centres. An email reply was received from one organisation that was not able to participate in the interviews. The interviews with volunteers were done in Newham Chinese Association in East London. All the interviews were carried out in Cantonese, tape recorded and translated into English.

Three case studies covering the Chinese Community Centre- Birmingham, Wai Yin Society in Manchester and Camden Chinese Community Centre in London are attached to Annexes B, C and D. A reading list is provided in Annex E for those who wish to know more about the Chinese community in the UK.

## 3. Changes and Challenges

The changes and challenges faced by Chinese community organisations over the last 10 years are discussed under the following headings:

- Change of origin and language
- Cultural and aspirational differences
- Ageing population and service users
- Funding cuts

## a) Change of Origin and Language

According to the official figures of Office for National Statistics (ONS), there were 247,403 Chinese people in the UK in 2001. In the 2011 census, the number increased by 75.08% to 433,150. Chinese constitutes the third largest ethnic minority, comprising 0.7% of the total UK population. London has the biggest Chinese population (124,250).

The first group of Chinese arrived in the UK in the 1850s. After the Second World War, ethnic Chinese people from the rural areas of Hong Kong started settling in the UK. In the 1960s and 1970s, immigrants from Hong Kong were joined by Chinese students and economic migrants from Singapore and Malaysia. There was also an influx of refugees from Vietnam, many of whom would be Cantonese speakers. In 1991, 34% of Chinese people in the UK came from Hong Kong and before the handover of Hong Kong in 1997, a significant number of middle-class Hong Kong migrants moved to the UK.

The Chinese community organisations were therefore mainly established and managed by migrants from Hong Kong who spoke Cantonese and Hakka dialects. However, the UK Chinese community became more diverse in recent years as a result of three trends. Firstly, there are more Chinese people born and brought up in Britain, who mainly speak English and limited Chinese. Secondly, there is an increasing number of young mainland Chinese on student visas. In 2016/17, there were 95,090 Chinese students and China is the only country showing a significant increase in student numbers (14% rise since 2012-13)<sup>1</sup>. Thirdly, immigrants from Mainland China speak Mandarin, many of whom are younger, educated and settled in the UK via Tier 1 entrepreneurial or investor routes.

This change from Cantonese speakers to mainland Chinese mandarin speakers has been experienced by Chinese community organisations. For example:

- The **Chinese Association of Tower Hamlets** reported that over the last 5 years the percentage of Mandarin speakers has increased to 20%.
- The **Chinese National Healthy Living Centre** in London Chinatown indicated an increase, from 10% in 2000 to 50% currently.

The demographic and linguistic changes in the UK Chinese population have considerable impacts on the Chinese community organisations, which is further discussed in the sections below.

## b) Cultural and Aspirational Differences

Although Chinese people share a common cultural heritage, there are significant differences between Chinese from Mainland China, Hong Kong and South East Asia, as

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<sup>1</sup> <https://ukcisa.org.uk/Research--Policy/Statistics/International-student-statistics-UK-higher-education>

well as those born in the UK. Since Hong Kong and mainland China had very different social, political and education systems (before 1997), Hong Kong Chinese and mainland Chinese generally have different worldviews. Similarly, Chinese people from South East Asia also have traits that reflect the social, cultural and political dynamics of the countries where they were born and brought up. Chinese people born, raised and educated from an early age in the UK are different again, as they are generally comfortable with both Chinese and British cultures.

The differences in languages and worldviews meant that each group finds it difficult to understand and mingle socially with each other. There is also a difference in aspirations. Many of the first generation Chinese immigrants from Hong Kong entered and stayed in the catering industry, whereas the new immigrants from mainland China are employed and investing in more diverse economic sectors. New associations have been established by migrants from mainland China, but there is very limited interaction between them and the more established Chinese community organisations. The membership of these new associations is often based on business interests or, more commonly, by having the same roots in particular regions in China.

For the older Chinese community organisations, the Mandarin speakers are seen as a significant pool of new service users, as well as potential future leaders. They are however unlikely to become regular users or be members unless they find a sense of belonging. A further challenge is that as the number of Chinese community organisations increases the voice of the Chinese community becomes more fragmented. This problem was acknowledged in the London Chinese Community Forum held in April 2016, which appealed to the traditional Chinese community organisations to “endeavour to forge closer links with these new organisations to bring together a more united voice for the community”.

### c) Ageing Population and Service Users

A large proportion of first-generation Chinese immigrants who arrived in Britain after World War II entered the catering industry. Owing to long working hours, they did not have time to learn English or integrate into mainstream society. Chinese community organisations therefore focused on supporting these Hong Kong Chinese immigrants with poor English skills primarily with advice and advocacy services. After retirement, a lot of these early migrants remained vulnerable and developed health problems which restrict their mobility. Meanwhile, the younger generation and the new migrants do not have the same need or level of interest in going to community centres. The number of people who visit these centres as a result has dropped. The experience of Chinese community centres in Camden and Haringey is fairly typical.

- **Camden Chinese Community Centre** - *Our users are mainly Hong Kong Chinese. Those who came in the 1960s are now stepping into retirement age. But they still face language and cultural barriers even though they have lived in the UK for*

*decades...can feel that the centre is in crisis as there are not enough younger users to take over from the old ones. We are facing succession problems. Some members are too old and with reduced mobility, they cannot come to the centre anymore.*

- **Haringey Chinese Community Centre** - *New Chinese immigrants generally have fewer problems with the English language and can adapt to the new environment more easily; the second generation, the UK-born and educated Chinese don't have problems accessing mainstream services. People who still need help are the first generation Chinese diaspora with language (difficulties) ..... They are ageing; older members pass away one after another. The centre users are mainly pensioners. The younger generation seldom visit as they don't need to.*

#### d) Funding Cuts

Since 2010, as a result of policy changes in the way the voluntary sector is funded and austerity drives which reduced the budgets available to local authorities, Chinese community organisations have been under severe financial pressure. In 2012, the Department of Communities and Local Government released a new integration strategy, 'Creating the Conditions for Integration'. It notes that the state's role should be "facilitator" and, as a matter of principle, an actor only of the last resort in exceptional circumstances. This policy shift combined with the UK government's austere economic approach has significantly transformed the funding landscape that community groups found themselves in. As a result, the funds available to community groups from local authorities have seen a sharp fall.

All of the Chinese community organisations in the four cities in this report have faced different levels of funding reduction by their local authority in recent years. Some centres have experienced a complete withdrawal of support from their local council and had to suspend certain services in the face of insufficient resources. The lack of resources is therefore the number one challenge Chinese community organisations have to cope with. It affects their viability, not only in terms of the provision of services but also the quality of services, human resource deployment and the ability to reach out to more people. Funding cuts have led to closures of many Chinese community organisations, especially in smaller towns.

The larger Chinese community organisations in cities with bigger Chinese populations have been adapting to the changes, some more successfully than others. Generally, there has been a drop in funding, reduced service provision and loss of staff, as exemplified by the following Chinese community organisations.

- **Haringey Chinese Community Centre** - *Around 10 years ago, 70% of our operational funds came from the local council. What we have now is project-based funding. We still have an advice service contract from the council ..... Because there is less resource from the government, we have to reduce the scale of operation of our luncheon club. Now members have to pay for taking part in it. About 10 years ago,*

*50 to 60 people would come to the centre every day but nowadays we see only around 20. In the past we had day-centre services but no longer.*

- **Chinese Association of Tower Hamlets** - *Our centre represents a certain number of Chinese living within the borough. Back then if we could justify our needs for the services, the success rate (for funding) would be high. Now the requirements of applying for council funds have changed ..... Compared to 10 years ago, the proportion of council funding awarded to us has been reduced by 60% to 70%. Now only 15% of our funds came from local government.*
- **Chinese Community Centre-Birmingham** - *Our main service was advice and advocacy when we were established in the 1980s. About 7 years ago, the council stopped funding our advice service. We had to apply for other funds in order to hire a part-time advisor to carry on the service. The lack of financial support limited our services. We launched a 3-year pilot dementia project. It was successful but we could not keep it going because we did not have sufficient budget.*
- **Camden Chinese Community Centre** - *Camden Council reduced their financial support to us. As a result, we stopped the healthy living project and youth club. For five years now, we have not received any community grants. We used to have around £8,000 a year. 10 years ago, 80% of our funds were from the local authority but now only 20%.*
- **Newham Chinese Association in East London**, which now only opens on Thursdays and Fridays - *The borough council removed their financial support 5 years ago ..... We have to cut back advice service. We suffer financial losses at the moment and need to use reserves and raise money to cover costs. The rent of the site goes up too. What we rely on is a 2-year fund from the People's Health Trust. This designated fund allows us to hire 2 project coordinators to share the job and keep the centre running. We launched Happy Together project and it will end in January 2019.*
- **Pagoda Chinese Community Centre in Liverpool** - *We used to have more than 20 staff and provided a range of services for the Chinese community including advice service and youth facilities. The Pagoda Youth Orchestra once performed in front of the Queen. In 2011, the city council withdrew funding and today there is no "Chinese community centre" left in Liverpool. We want to keep the community centre running and help the elderly. Our advice service supports the social care department with interpretation assistance and our interpreters need to be booked two months in advance.*

As the funding support from local authorities dwindled, Chinese community organisations have to look for other available avenues of funding like private trusts and foundations, as well as competing for service contracts and projects. These are often short term and the continuous need to write funding or bidding applications is time consuming and resource intensive. The short time frames of small projects also create problems in recruiting and retaining staff.

Chinese community organisations are pitched against well-established organisations, and the chances of small organisations accessing these funds are very low. In addition, public service contracts are often bundled into large packages, which are beyond the capacity of Chinese community organisations. The experiences of 2 organisations quoted below are typical.

- **Bishop Ho Ming Wah Association and Community Centre** - *Applying for project funding is labour-intensive work and we need to fulfil different criteria. It is difficult for small organisations to get anything. We've been turned down quite often.*
- **Camden Chinese Community Centre** - *Before, the funds would last for 5 years but now they are all project-based ones. If we need to submit funding applications every year it means lots of uncertainty for the future of our staff. In a way, it destroys employee morale and discourages people to take up a career in community work.*

#### 4. Current and Future Service Needs

The demographic changes in the UK Chinese populations have impacts on the relevance of Chinese community organisations and the services they provide. The following current and future development of services is discussed below.

- Advice and advocacy
- Interpretation and translation
- Elderly support services
- Carers and mental health
- Students support
- Recreational activities

##### a) Advice and Advocacy

For most Chinese community organisations, advice and advocacy was a mainstay of their service provision. However, as a result of funding cuts since 2010, all the community organisations had to either stop or curtail their advice and advocacy services. There is however still a demand, from both the early migrants who are now elderly and even the newer migrants from mainland China who are younger and better educated.

- **Chinese Community Centre-Birmingham** - *The advice services are still in high demand. Nearly 90% of service users of our advisory service are immigrants who speak Mandarin. New immigrants are young families. They need advice and information on housing, schools and health services. In addition, those new to the country do not understand the culture and laws. They have experienced bullying by*

*neighbours or being taken advantage of. They come to our centre to seek help when they come across these issues.*

However, to maintain advice and advocacy services, albeit at a limited level compared to before, Chinese community organisations had to diversify revenue sources, from charging a fee to applying for small project grants from a variety of sources. The main challenge faced by those community organisations that continue to provide advice services is retaining expert staff, as project funding is uncertain (no guarantee of winning the next round of bids). Fee charging and donations although helpful is generally insufficient to enable full-time employment and there are always some people who cannot afford to pay.

## b) Interpretation and Translation

Interpretation and translation services have been and continue to be a mainstay of Chinese community organisations operations. The ageing UK Chinese population has led to rising demand for healthcare and medical interpretation service. Chinese elderly who cannot get help from family and friends with making medical appointments, reading letters from hospitals or interpreting for them during medical consultations will turn to Chinese community organisations for assistance. Also, the younger Chinese generation, even if they want to, may no longer be able to help with translation and interpretation because they lack Chinese language skills.

NHS hospitals are in a position to provide interpretation services for patients who belong to ethnic minority groups. Some hospitals have residential interpreters and some have access to translation agencies. However, the quality of service is variable.

- **Manchester Chinese Centre** - *As an agency, we received £5 in administration fee for each referral. The revenue is used to hire an admin staff. We used to have more than 30 interpreters working for us but in 2012 the policy changed. Everything is now computerised and there is no need for agencies anymore. Service providers turned to offer telephone interpreting service; it means an interpreter is on the phone translating for the patient and the doctor during a meeting. I have heard that the interpreters are sometimes not accurate with their translation.*
- **Chinese Community Centre-Birmingham** - *The Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) contract out health projects to provide interpretation service in hospitals across Birmingham. CCGs call in external support from interpretation agencies but our members told us that the quality is not that good. The interpreter is different every time. They have no relation with the patients and sometimes have a bad attitude. They are hourly paid and some would leave in the middle of the meeting. Lots of patients wanted to complain but did not know which department to turn to. We had meetings with the CCGs to discuss how to monitor the quality. We can provide free interpretation service related to medical issues as we are funded by the*

*CCGs. The demand is high. If it's for personal business such as banking, users need to pay for the service.*

Some Chinese community organisations have been successful in obtaining regular contracts from providers to provide health-related interpretation and translation services. Other less fortunate organisations rely on small grants support or on volunteers to provide limited support. For example:

- **Newham Chinese Association** - *Our volunteers will help to read letters, for example, bills and hospital letters for the elderly. Members around 60 years old may know a little bit of English but those over 70 are really helpless. We sometimes go along with them to hospital meetings, help to make calls and book GP appointments.*

### c) Elderly Support Services

As the Chinese population who settled in the UK in the 1960s aged, their lack of English proficiency is making them vulnerable. Combined with a higher life-expectancy, there has been an escalating demand for health, day care and social care support services in recent years. Over the next 10 to 20 years, as Chinese elderly becomes less mobile, the need for home care services, sheltered housing and befriending services that are designed to meet the specific requirements of Chinese elders will increase. Some Chinese community organisations are already home care service providers. For the Chinese Association of Tower Hamlets and Camden Chinese Community Centre, home care provision is their core business and main service. Others, such as Wai Yin Society in Manchester, aim to do so in the near future whereas the Chinese Community Centre in Birmingham has started a pilot project 'Home for Good'.

There are however considerable challenges. Owing to the nature of the job and the working conditions, Chinese service providers face difficulties in recruiting and retaining qualified care workers. Bilingual home care workers who can provide culturally appropriate care to meet the social and practical needs of Chinese people are in critical shortage. The demand outstrips supply and there is no sign of this abating. However, strict regulations, insufficient funding allocation from local authorities and the packaging of large service contracts put pressure on small service providers. Service providers of home care also need to register with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and is subject to regular inspection. The difficulties of providing home care services are highlighted by the experiences of the following Chinese community organisations.

- **Camden Chinese Community Centre** - *Local governments tend to use the tendering process to decide who will get their service contracts. The authorities tend to favour big organisations. Leading organisations may allocate sub-contracts. The chance for a small organisation to successfully bid for service contracts is low if it is not part of an alliance or consortium.*



- **Chinese Association of Tower Hamlets** - *We started this service 18 years ago because we foresaw the needs. We recruit care workers and train them. Our care workers are knowledgeable and work to a high standard. It is a challenge for us to recruit people who are suited to this kind of work. First of all, they have to be bilingual. Second, personal care service is demanding but the salary is very low. The government buys the service from the service provider but won't give us enough money. The authority has high expectations too. You need to have a license to bid for the contract and CQC inspects the quality and standard annually. We formed a partnership with St. Hilda's East Community Centre and Community of Refugees from Vietnam). St. Hilda's lead the project and we share the service contract.*
- **Chinese Wellbeing in Liverpool** - *We are funded partly as a service provider by our local authority, but our relationship is strained because the local authority does not pay enough for each hour of care delivered to cover our costs. We are not unique in facing that problem because as a whole the care sector is in crisis, with many providers simply pulling out of the field. We have a greater problem though because we provide services for Cantonese, Mandarin and other Chinese dialects, as well as for English-speaking Chinese people. This has implications for the pool of labour we can access to deliver those services and the cost of training them up to the point where they are able to provide those services in accordance with the terms of our delivery contract.*

#### d) Carers and Mental Health

Chinese families are generally self-reliant and have low expectation for public services, as taking care of the old or infirm members of the family is perceived as a duty in the Chinese tradition. However, Chinese carers are under huge pressure. Many of them have difficulty accessing mainstream services and lack awareness of their entitlement to receiving benefits and support as unpaid carers. Due to language and cultural barriers, Chinese patients or their carers who seek help from mainstream service providers often find it hard to express what they want to say or how they feel in a second language. Chinese carers also need encouragement to be more open-minded to solutions that relieve their physical and psychological burdens.

- **Chinese Community Centre-Birmingham** - *Chinese carers need supports. They face language and cultural barriers. They don't know their rights. The mainstream (carers support) providers have different cultural values and Chinese carers don't find their services suitable. Even for the carer group consortium in Birmingham, "Chinese carers" is new to them. We are part of a carer consortium and we share the funds to provide culturally-sensitive carer support service at our centre. We have been providing this service for 10 years and keep receiving referrals. Now the group has over 100 members. In particular, there are a number of older carers. We have training courses and well-being activities for the carers to take a break and enjoy themselves.*

Officially, the number of Chinese suffering from mental health is very small. This is because, for many Chinese, “mental health problems” are a stigma, which prevents them or their carers from seeking help for themselves or for family. Also, some Chinese mental health patients are middle-aged and their carers (who are usually their parents) are getting old. Hence, Chinese people with mental health issues are not easily noticeable within the Chinese community and in society. However, the need for mental health services clearly exists but at the moment not many Chinese organisations provide this kind of assistance. This is because providing mental health support is resource-intensive. It takes a long time to reach the people in need, build relationship and gain trust, as well as recruit qualified staff to provide the necessary support.

The Chinese National Healthy Living Centre based in central London includes counselling in its health-related programmes. The Chinese Mental Health Association, which is also based in London, is the only Chinese organisation which specifically provides mental health services. The Chinese Community Centre-Birmingham had a mental health outreach service, which was cut back due to lack of resources. Now the Centre only supports those caring for someone with mental health conditions, makes referrals and runs a social network platform to help parents of children with special learning needs, such as autism, dyslexia and ADHD.

#### e) Students Support

Students from Mainland China form the largest number of overseas students in the UK. The total number of foreign students studying in the UK in 2016/17 was 442,375; among them nearly 21.5% (95,090) were from mainland China<sup>2</sup>. This number has risen by 14% since 2012/13. The latest statistics showed that three nationalities accounted for 53% of the study-related visas granted in 2017, with the biggest number going to Chinese nationals (88,456 or 40% of the total). There is a growing concern over how to support those young people who might have difficulties adapting to the new environment while dealing with anxiety related to studying, personal relationships and social isolation.

For instance, both Wai Yin Society in Manchester and Pagoda Chinese Community Centre have received cases referred to them by universities. However, without the resources to deploy qualified counsellors familiar with Chinese culture, most Chinese community organisations struggle to provide help. Nevertheless, some support services for students have started. The Chinese National Healthy Living Centre in London has launched a counselling project to help students struggling with mental health issues, with a counsellor who is familiar with both cultures and able to communicate in Cantonese, Mandarin and English. The Chinese Community Centre-Birmingham started a WeChat service for students to contact if they need advice.

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<sup>2</sup> UK Council for International Student Affairs (UKCISA)

## f) Recreational Activities

A noticeable trend amongst Chinese community organisations, especially those that no longer have enough funding to provide language, information and advisory services, is a shift towards running recreational activities that appeal to various user groups, such as Tai Chi classes, dancing lessons, table tennis and short trips. In particular, as elderly people are more aware of health issues, more recreational activities are targeted at improving physical and mental well-being, as well as reducing loneliness.

- **Islington Chinese Association** - *In the old days, the demand for English classes was huge but now it's far less. We need to think about the needs of our target users. What do the existing elderly members want? What do the new immigrants need? Our aim is to provide services which can meet their needs in order to recruit more users. For example, we found that Chinese cultural activities such as Chinese painting and calligraphy are popular with 50 to 60 year old people from Hong Kong. Trips are always popular with the elderly.*
- **Chinese Association of Tower Hamlets** - *Think of the new retirees, they are educated and have few worries about money. What can the centres do for them? Community centres can try to provide them with more recreational and social activities, such as sports and outings, which can promote physical and mental health. It is one of the directions.*
- **Bishop Ho Ming Wah Association and Community Centre** - *One challenge is how to attract users from different age groups and let others know our services is not limited to Chinese people. We changed our service direction from advice service to providing recreational activities in the past 6 to 7 years. In the past the elderly might be interested in learning English but now they maybe keener to pick up Mandarin. We now aim to help the elderly to live more independently and purposefully; ..... by providing activities for them to join ..... we found that older people love to go travelling, so we try to organise more trips ..... they want to travel but don't know how.*
- **Newham Chinese Association** - *Chinese people are in general health-conscious. Lots of members come and play Tai Chi, join our lunch club and birthday parties. Many elderly members live on their own. Some of them live with their grown-up children but they are always busy at work. Our members have known each other for a long time. They form small friendship groups and hang out together or visit one another at home and play mahjong.*

In addition to the examples above, Wai Yin Society in Manchester provides a Chinese meal delivery service to the older people living at home. They also hire a shuttle bus to take members to its Shueng Lok Wellbeing Centre where they can play Tai Chi, enjoy lunch and socialise. Besides recreational activities for the elderly, younger groups are also targeted. For example, London Chinese Community Centre has youth services, which include a homework club, football team and summer camp. The Chinese

Community Centre – Birmingham has active table-tennis, badminton, dance and singing activities, as well as a young people group that organises social events for themselves, support for elderly events and fund raising activities.

## 5. Lessons and the Ways Forward

Although most of the smaller Chinese community organisations have closed or no longer provide service functions other than organising the occasional social events, there are Chinese community organisations that have survived and continue to provide services. This section summarises how these Chinese community organisations have been coping with the various challenges and the strategies adopted or being considered to remain sustainable into the future.

- Rebranding Chinese community organisations
- Collaboration and partnerships
- Volunteering
- Entrepreneurship and revenue generation
- Governance, leadership and succession planning

### a) Rebranding Chinese Community Organisations

A key strategy being adopted by the surviving Chinese community organisations is firstly to acknowledge that the social and political environment has changed and secondly to adapt accordingly. Some Chinese community organisations foresaw the changes early and began to emphasise “transformation” or “rebranding”. This involves a change of mindset from the original intention of supporting immigrants from Hong Kong when the Chinese community organisations were first established to serving a broader range of potential groups. The future is to envisage providing services not only limited to groups in the Chinese community but to include all communities within a locality where the organisation is based.

- **Islington Chinese Association** recruited a full-time community development coordinator in March 2018 - *The post is funded by the Big Lottery. It is a 3-year project. One of the responsibilities of the community development coordinator is to recruit more users and volunteers. The local BME groups are our targets ..... it would be great if our activities encourage inter-ethnic understanding and in turn help people to integrate into mainstream society. We can also strengthen our voice and fight for more benefits for the community. How do we attract people from different ethnic backgrounds? Actually, we already have Caucasians, Indians, Malays and Japanese taking part in our Tai Chi, Chi Kung and Mandarin classes.*

The Chinese community is often known as the “silent” or “hidden” minority in the UK. Their low profile is largely due to long hours of work and the attitudes of self-reliance and political apathy. Culturally speaking, the Chinese are generally inward-looking and tend to centre their attention around the family. Furthermore, the Chinese are scattered in different parts of the UK, making the number of Chinese residents in some wards very small, and hence lacking local influence as far as service providers are concerned. However, there is general agreement amongst Chinese community organisations that more Chinese people should take up public roles and enter the political arena, as it will have positive effects on the Chinese community.

- **Newham Chinese Association** - *My husband and I are new retirees and actively volunteering for the centre. We are proficient in English..... The authority does not understand Chinese culture and as a result, the Chinese are not taken into account in the future planning of services. We need to fight for our rights. Users of community centres have to play a more active role too. They need to voice their needs and do everything to avoid these centres from closing down. We will get nowhere if we succumb to fear or avoid getting into trouble.*
- **Chinese Community Centre-Birmingham** - *I hope more Chinese people will become aware of the importance of political and social participation ..... this is not easy. Parents still want their children to become professionals rather than politicians. Older Chinese only care about things involving their vital interests. Younger Chinese between 30 to 40 years old have a clearer identity and are more willing to fight for equality ..... the third generation of Chinese immigrants are more willing to take on social and civic responsibilities.*

There is an increasing awareness by Chinese community organisations that more efforts should be made to integrate Chinese immigrants into mainstream British society. Participation in social and political activities would therefore help to forge a citizen identity and facilitates integration into society.

- **Manchester Chinese Centre** - *The parents of our Chinese school students are from Hong Kong, different provinces of Mainland China and other ethnic minorities. About 5 years ago, we realised that in order to teach the students we need to teach their parents first, for example, showing them the importance of integrating into mainstream society, learning British culture and forging a social identity. These parents helped us organise various social events, took part in them and created opportunities for students to blend into mainstream society, and not just stay in the “Chinese-speaking community”.*

This change in mindset towards integration, serving other communities and engaging more widely with British social and political life has implications on modes of service operations, revenue generation and governance structures, which are further discussed below.

## b) Collaboration and Partnerships

To increase the chance of successfully bidding for funding in a competitive environment, Chinese community organisations have increasingly reached out to form partnerships with other volunteer organisations or join a consortium, either within the Chinese community or with other groups.

- **Wai Yin Society in Manchester** - *Organisations with similar service aims can form a partnership...a collective voice to fight for resources for a big project. Our MAYA project is supported by the Big Lottery Fund. We are one of eight organisations in the consortium. We built up good relationships with other BME groups. We are open, honest and we respect each other. It is a win-win strategy. Our cancer support project is a volunteer-led programme. We collaborate with Macmillan Cancer Support. They formed a partnership with 3 centres including us in Manchester and we are the one serving the Chinese community here.*

Another example is the carers support service in the Chinese Community Centre-Birmingham, which was part of a successful bid by Forward Carers Consortium, consisting of a group of charitable and not-for-profit organisations led by Midland Mencap.

Forming a partnership and joining a consortium is however not easy. Each partner has to bring something to the table that enhances the success of the bid. Generally, Chinese community organisations that provide specialised services which have the required expertise, quality standards and client base would find it easier to collaborate with other groups.

There are suggestions that Chinese community organisations should form a consortium of their own and help each other to survive by putting in joint bids for service contracts and other commissioned work. This idea has yet to be materialised for various reasons, partly due to the way local authority funding is structured. Many funding streams specify that services are restricted to benefit only residents within a borough or locality. Most Chinese community organisations simply do not have sufficient human resources to deploy on building the relationships for successful collaborative efforts. Furthermore, there is a lack of trust between the Chinese community organisations over leadership and resource sharing issues. Leaders of the centres came from different backgrounds, have different political viewpoints and as a result, it is hard for them to cooperate. The absence of a convincing leader or group of leaders to call upon Chinese community organisations to cooperate also undermines such efforts.

One exception is the Chinese National Healthy Living Centre. Dementia awareness and support programme is one of its flagship services. It worked with the Chinese Women's Group-Woolwich to promote awareness of dementia to their group members in 2015

and 2018, as the women's group does not have the resources and knowledge to launch the project on its own.

A further area where collaboration within the Chinese community is needed is between the Hong Kong Chinese who make up a big proportion of the older Chinese population in the UK and the new Chinese immigrants from mainland China and are mostly working age. Many Chinese community organisations are aware of the communication barrier between the two sides and are seeking to offer suitable activities that cater to the needs of people from Mainland China. They also need to make contact with the new organisations formed by mainland Chinese to look for collaboration opportunities. For example:

- **Islington Chinese Association** - *co-organised The UK Chinese Table Tennis Singles Tournament with the UK Chinese Table Tennis Association (UKCTTA) in 2016, in collaboration with the Beijing Association of the UK, as well as a Jiangxi and a Shanghai social club. The event attracted a good response, and as a result the centre continues to organise table tennis networking matches.*

Another possible venue for collaboration opportunities are the Chinese schools, where a proportion of the pupils come from Mandarin-speaking families. The parents can be engaged to become volunteers and given the responsibilities to run the activities they want. This is a critical step, as over time Mandarin speakers will become the largest Chinese group in the UK and the future sustainability of existing Chinese community organisations will depend on their interests and commitment.

### c) Volunteering

Volunteers play a vital role in ensuring the sustainability of any charitable organisations. In Chinese community organisations, many of the activities and services are either wholly or partly supported by volunteers.

- **Bishop Ho Ming Wah Association and Community Centre** - *We only have one full-time staff and one part-time chef. The provision of services very much depends on volunteers. The scale of service depends on how many volunteers we have. Volunteers are mainly female. Chinese males seldom come out and socialise. We noticed there is a need for Saturday homework tutorial groups for children who have recently settled in the UK. Our volunteer teachers are bilingual and can deliver one-to-one tutorial. And some elderly live alone and need the help of volunteers when going to GP or hospital appointments.*
- **The Chinese Women's Group-Woolwich** has no funding at all and is managed by volunteers only - *Members come to practise Tai Chi and play mahjong. In small centres like ours, members take care of each other. We look out for each other and keep in touch. We need to think of how Chinese organisations can help the government. This is our value. If the activities we provide can improve the wellbeing*

*of our elderly members, it means we help the government save on health care expenses. The authority should help us deliver more leisure and social activities.*

Even the larger Chinese community organisations depend heavily on volunteers. For example, the Chinese Community Centre – Birmingham rely on a group of dedicated volunteers to support paid staff in *Hong Que*, which is a day centre for elderly people. Without the support of volunteers, costs would be higher and the service less viable.

However, it is not easy to maintain and recruit new volunteers. Many older Chinese people have a traditional view of charitable work, starting first with family, the clan and then the region where they originated in China. Younger people and university students have perceptions that Chinese community organisations are old-fashioned and not meeting their needs. British born Chinese may prefer to volunteer in mainstream organisations to become part of the wider British society instead of being constrained within the Chinese community.

There are funds for volunteer development, which Chinese community organisations should consider utilise better. Potential volunteers can be sought from two sources. First, existing members should be encouraged to become volunteers to enhance the user involvement aspect of service development. Second, there needs to be a stronger drive to recruit younger retirees or those semi-retired (in their 50s and 60s), as they are relatively energetic, active and proficient in both English and Chinese. Some of these people also have expertise in certain fields or have retired from professional careers, such as in medicine, law and accounting. Volunteers may also come from unexpected sources.

- **Pagoda Chinese Community Centre** - *at one point was facing the prospects of closing down due to a lack of local government financial support. The volunteers who helped us overcome this crisis were local British residents who joined our Tai Chi class. And interestingly, parents of our youth orchestra students who came from Mainland China were more willing to do volunteer work and donate money than the Cantonese.*

#### d) Entrepreneurship and Revenue Generation

One of the key mindset changes in Chinese community organisations is changing from dependence on government support to more entrepreneurial modes of operations. Service users have to be weaned from receiving a free service to having to pay for it. The staff, management and Board of Trustees have to become more aware of the costs of services and adopt more entrepreneurial financial management practice. Some Chinese community organisations have started to charge for services and others have become or are considering establishing social enterprises. For examples:



- **Chinese National Healthy Living Centre** - *Our counselling service charges a reasonable price. We are not aiming to make a profit as the income will be used to provide services in the centre.*
- **Chinese Association of Tower Hamlets** - *We have adopted the principles of “social enterprise” in running our services. We self-fund our services. Home care service is our core business and main service. The income from our Chinese school covers about a tenth of the running costs of the centre.*
- **Wai Yin Society in Manchester** – *We receive income from renting out centre activity rooms and property investment. We have the idea of developing a social enterprise, like a “Wai Yin Cafe”, but it's still in the early stages ..... in the future, we would like to become a care service provider.*
- **Chinese Community Centre-Birmingham** – *has set up a Community Interest Company, however, it is currently at an embryonic stage and not yet commercially active.*

Chinese community organisations that own their own buildings or occupy premises receive regular rental income from hiring rooms out to third parties. The Haringey Chinese Community Centre is fortunate to own its freehold and does not need to worry about rising rents. The Chinese Community Centre – Birmingham rents its premises but is able to generate substantial income from hiring out the hall and seminar rooms.

Chinese community organisations are still charities and it is important that a strong charitable purpose is retained. Hence, they should continue to seek funds from the public sector, such as the Big Lottery Fund, smaller grants from trusts and foundations and sponsorships from private companies, as well as running fund raising events and encouraging donations from individuals.

The issues around grant application have been highlighted earlier. Small grants and fund raising activities would generally raise enough funds for short term services or projects. Although helpful, they do not provide for a viable and sustainable future. Larger funded projects over a 3 to 5 years' timeframe would be better. However, applying to the Big Lottery Fund requires a very convincing proposal. The project has to be big enough, which means working in partnerships with other organisations, either within the Chinese community or with other communities.

Another option is to encourage the Chinese community to donate more generously during fund raising events and to leave behind legacies. For instance, Bishop Ho Ming Wah Association benefited from the legacy of a Caucasian member who joined their Tai Chi class and very much appreciated the centre's contribution to society. However, as highlighted earlier when volunteering was discussed, families and clans are prioritised and Chinese elders are generally reluctant to leave a legacy in their will for community organisations.

Chinese community organisations are also increasingly turning to the Chinese business sector for support. There is however generally a lack of awareness amongst Chinese businesses towards the idea of discharging corporate social responsibility and giving back to society. Another source of potential support which is mostly untapped is British businesses operating in the China market, trading with China or collaborating with Chinese companies.

- **Chinese National Healthy Living Centre** - *The centres are struggling because of the lack of resources. Business associations can create a pot of money by establishing a trust fund for community centres to apply for..... I hope we have a Chinese philanthropist like Bill Gates. If the media can cover more stories on philanthropy and how charity work benefits society, that would be great. This may inspire someone to do just that.*

Already there are examples of Chinese philanthropists, such as (i) the China Exchange in London was created by Sir David Tang who had the vision for a dynamic centre promoting excellence in Chinatown and (ii) the Wing Yip Foundation that provides bursaries for students of Chinese origin. Times are changing, and the next generation of Chinese business leaders are likely to be more supportive of charitable aims.

#### e) Governance, Leadership and Succession Planning

A board member or trustee of a charity is responsible for ensuring the organisation is well-managed and operating within agreed policies, the law and budget. He or she also needs to think strategically about funding and future directions. The long term viability and sustainability of Chinese community organisations is therefore highly dependent on the vision, policies and competence of their Board of Trustees (or Directors). Generally, the more successful Chinese community organisations have diverse Boards with a range of professional and social backgrounds and age groups. The inclusion of non-Chinese people into the Board is critical to enabling the Board to go beyond Chinese issues and Chinese ways of doing things. This is especially important for Chinese community organisations who are rebranding to appeal to other communities.

- **Bishop Ho Ming Wah Association and Community Centre** - *Our board members are professionals, church members, not just Chinese. A local board member with social status helps spread the organisation's name and aid fundraising efforts as they have a good social network. A British trustee is familiar with local policies and brings in western mode of thinking and tend to be more open-minded. The thing is people who are capable will help you only if you are worth helping so you need to achieve something first.*
- **Chinese Community Centre-Birmingham** - *Our management board is very diverse, with people from different countries of origin and backgrounds. They are all very*

*committed. We started to look for successors in the last two years. We hope to recruit young talents, especially British-born Chinese.*

The Board of the Chinese Community Centre, for example, consists of Chinese people from mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Malaysia, as well as British born Chinese and one person of white British background. Professional backgrounds include management, accountancy, social care, engineers, technology, education and business, as well members who represent the service users. The oldest Board member is in her early seventies and the youngest in his early twenties. The latter is very important for succession planning.

Although it is difficult to recruit younger, talented people as they have family and career or business to take care of, it is crucial that efforts are made to engage them. They not only bring an understanding of contemporary issues but they are also the future community leaders. Whether Chinese community organisations will continue to exist, and in what forms, will depend on the vision, passion and commitment of the next generation of leaders.

## **6. Conclusion**

The last ten years have seen more users from Mainland China access the services of Chinese community organisations that have been traditionally supported by users from Hong Kong. Meanwhile, the second and third generations who were born and educated in the UK do not have language problems and new migrants from Mainland China in recent years are generally younger and have better English proficiency. Although the newer immigrants are better educated and have less need for language support, there continues to be a lack of English proficiency amongst the older Chinese, which puts the most vulnerable members of the Chinese community at a disadvantage. The earlier generation of Chinese immigrants continue to require advice, translation and interpretation services, and even some of the new mainland Chinese migrants seek advice support.

There is also a rise in the demand for health-related services as the proportion of older Chinese people increase in the community. The areas of service in high demand include domiciliary care, medical interpreting and recreational activities which help to promote healthy living and wellbeing. Service users nowadays are mainly elderly and have turned some Chinese community organisations inadvertently into 'older people day centres'. Other areas of demand include services for mental health and carers support.

The main challenge facing Chinese community centres is the lack of resources, especially financial, due to changes in government policies and funding cuts. The focus on survival in the context of depleting resources also means there is less energy to spare for longer-term strategic planning. Chinese community organisations are therefore at

a critical juncture and decisions already taken or have to be made very soon will determine how they might adapt and survive in the future. There is an acceptance that the old mode of operations built around advice and advocacy are no longer valid. There is a need for transformation and rebranding in response to emerging demands. The question is what directions should Chinese community organisations take to remain relevant, viable and sustainable in the longer term.

Some Chinese community organisations, especially the smaller ones, have chosen to narrow their service provision focus primarily on social and recreational activities. The main advantage of taking this path is that it is possible to become financially self-dependent especially with support from volunteers and charging users a small fee. Others continue on a different service provision path by adapting to new demands. For example, the Chinese Association of Tower Hamlets primary function is providing homecare services with secondary educational services. Wai Yin Society and the Chinese Community Centre – Birmingham, on the other hand, has gone for a broader mix of services such as health, mental health, elderly care, parenting, carers, education, advice and interpretation.

Hence, there is no one development model for Chinese community organisations to emulate to remain sustainable. Instead, depending on the visions and passions of each Chinese community organisation, old and new, different models will evolve. Where there are opportunities to do so Chinese community organisations should be encouraged to come together to share experience and to cooperate, perhaps even working together to promote a more consistent voice on behalf of the Chinese community in the UK.

There is also a growing awareness that Chinese community organisations should not only exist for disadvantaged Chinese people, but that we should also make sure our compassion and duty of care extend to others in other communities. Doing this would involve not just opening our doors to other communities but also to integrate into mainstream British society. This means working in partnership with organisations from other communities for broader and more ambitious civic outcomes. It also means getting more involved in local and national politics, to make the voice of both the Chinese and other disadvantaged community groups heard in the public arena.

The analysis and discussion presented in this report is based mainly on the views of leaders and managers in 14 Chinese community organisations that were established in the 1980s. Further work is needed to obtain the views of volunteers, younger people and other Chinese groups, such as the mainland Chinese and British born Chinese, as well as the leaders of organisations recently formed by mainland Chinese.

## Annex A: Research Participants

Chinese Welfare Trust would like to thank the following individuals from their respective community organisation for generously sharing their views which formed the basis of this report:

- Alan Chau, Centre Manager, Chinese Association of Tower Hamlet (London)
- Andy Green, Chair, Chinese Wellbeing (Liverpool)
- Anna Yim, CEO, Chinese Community Centre-Birmingham (Birmingham)
- Celia Choi, Project Co-ordinator, Newham Chinese Association (London) and volunteers
- Christine Yau MBE, Chair, London Chinese Community Centre (London)
- Circle Steele, CEO, Wai Yin Society (Manchester)
- Eddie Chan, Centre Director, Chinese National Healthy Living Centre (London)
- Edith Lau, Centre Manager, Bishop Ho Ming Wah Association and Community Centre (London)
- Fung Ping Liu, Vice-president, Chinese Women's Group-Woolwich (London)
- Jenny Wong, Director, Manchester Chinese Centre (Manchester)
- Joseph Ho, Centre Manager, Camden Chinese Community Centre (London)
- Perry Fung, Centre Manager, Islington Chinese Association (London)
- Raymond Yip, Centre Manager, Haringey Chinese Community Centre (London)
- Zi Lan Liao, Director, Pagoda Chinese Arts (Liverpool)

Thirteen centres are registered charities. The Chinese Women's Group-Woolwich is a volunteer group in the Royal Borough of Greenwich, London. Haringey Chinese Community Centre, Chinese Association of Tower Hamlets and Manchester Chinese Centre also run Chinese schools. Chinese Wellbeing (former Merseyside Chinese Community Development Association, MCCDA) in Liverpool provided an email reply.

## Annex B: Case Study – Chinese Community Centre-Birmingham

### 1. Background

Chinese Community Centre-Birmingham (CCC-B) was established in 1977 by a group of Chinese volunteers to provide information and advice to Chinese immigrants. CCC-B started out by sharing an office with the Sparkbrook Advice Centre. As the demand for CCC-B services grew, CCC-B moved several times to larger premises. CCC-B is a registered charity and was incorporated in 1995 as a limited company. In 1997, Trident Housing Association with support from CCC-B and the Birmingham Chinese Youth Centre (BCYC) successfully applied for funds to build a community centre alongside a residential scheme for Chinese elderly. CCC-B moved into the Q-Lorc, which in Chinese means 'a place for people to be happy' in January 2000.

### 2. Services

Current services provided by CCC-B are:

- Community Services  
Advice & Advocacy, Carers Support, Elderly Support (Hong Que Day Centre), ESOL, Health Development, Student Support, Members Activities
- Business Services  
Business Support, Dance Group Hire, Event Management, Food Hygiene Training, Interpreting & Translating, Room Hire

The Centre supports a table-tennis club, a badminton club, a dance group and a choir group. The hall is used regularly by a martial arts club and on Sunday by a church group. More information on CCC-B services and activities can be obtained from <http://chinesebirmingham.org.uk/>, <https://www.facebook.com/chinesebirmingham/> and <https://twitter.com/chinesebham>

### 3. Governance, Staffing and Volunteers

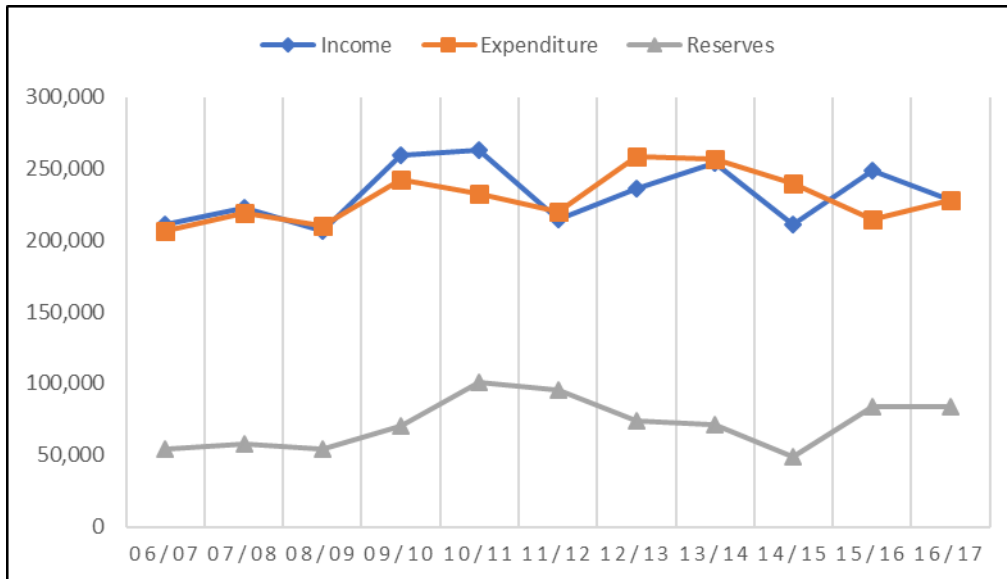
CCC-B is governed by a diverse Board of Trustees. Over the last 20 years, the Board consisted of a mixed of Chinese people from Hong Kong, Mainland China, Taiwan, South-East Asia and UK born Chinese, as well as non-Chinese. The ages of current Board members range from the early twenties to over 65. The main language used is English with occasional interpretation when needed.

The Centre is currently run by a Chief Executive Officer, a manager and 2 members of staff, supported by a pool of sessional workers and a large group of volunteers (over 20

people, mostly retired and non-working spouses). The volunteer group, led by the Vice-Chair, does the catering for the Day Centre and any event requiring food and logistic support. A younger volunteer group was recently formed, comprising of young professionals and students, to support the Centre.

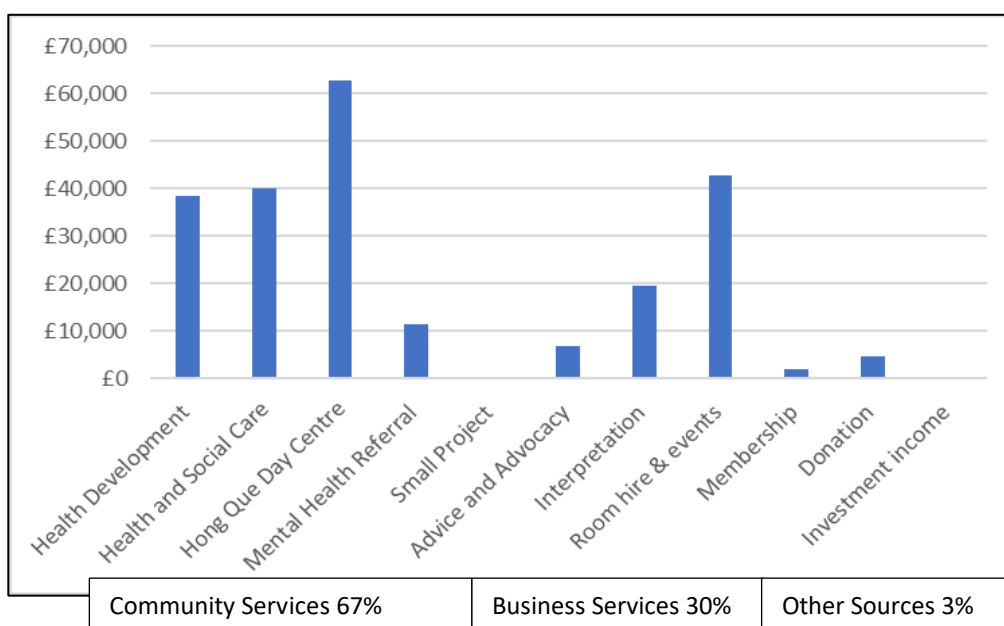
#### 4. Finance

CCC-B revenue and expenditure over the last 10 years is illustrated in the table below.



Financial data obtained from accounts filed in Companies House

A breakdown of revenue from CCC-B Annual Report 2016/17 is given below.



The main change over the last 10 years is that CCC-B no longer receives grant funding from Birmingham City Council. Advice and advocacy is a paid service (a free walk-in service is provided once a week). All funded services are from service level agreements, contracts from competitive tenders and applications for projects from a variety of funders. CCC-B also regularly applies for special projects. The years when the revenue was higher reflected the presence of larger special projects.

## 5. Challenges, Changes and Future Outlook

The challenges and the changes made over the years are summarised below.

1. CCC-B had its lowest point in 1998 and 1999 when annual revenue dropped to around £50,000. A bold decision was taken to close the Centre for several months and 2 staff retained to only make funding applications. Since then, CCC-B revenues rose year on year until it stabilised between £200,000 to £250,000.
2. CCC-B recognised the Government policy on austerity early on and began to make policy decisions about 5 years ago. The options were to manage slow decline (as funding from government sources decreases) until the Centre shuts down or to go all out for transformative change. The Board and management agreed on transformative change.
3. Early actions focused on changing the organisation culture towards working together as a multi-disciplinary team and an understanding of opportunity costs; that altruistic services can only be provided if the Centre is commercially viable. CCC-B services were re-grouped into cost centres and management learned how to prepare quarterly financial reports that include profit and loss forecasts.
4. A decision was made that CCC-B should no longer look inward at the Chinese community only but to engage with other communities in Birmingham, as well as with the business community (both Chinese and non-Chinese) and to take a partnership approach with relevant funding bodies.
5. Collaborative projects, activities and fund raising events were conducted in partnership with other Chinese and non-Chinese voluntary organisations. The aim is to demonstrate that CCC-B is part of and contributes positively to the social, cultural and business fabric of Birmingham and the West Midlands (not just to the Chinese community).
6. Marketing and public relations were taken seriously. The website and CCC-B logo were modernised, and social media accounts created on Facebook, Twitter and WeChat. The social media sites are managed by one member of staff, amongst her other duties, with support from volunteers.

Although CCC-B will remain financially viable in the next 3 years, the longer term outlook is uncertain. To mitigate against loss of revenue when a contract is completed,



CCC-B will continue to diversify its sources of income. One recent step CCC-B has taken is to establish a Community Interest Company, although business activity in the CIC is presently limited. In the longer term, CCC-B aims to transform into a broader charity and social enterprise offering community, social, cultural, educational and business services, as well as dynamic spaces for interactions between East and West in Birmingham and the West Midlands. Whether this is realistic or doable will depend on what opportunities and resources become available.

## Annex C: Case Study – Wai Ying Society, Manchester

### 1. Background

Wai Yin Society was founded in 1988 by a group of community-minded Chinese women who felt that the views and needs of Chinese women were not being represented. Traditionally Chinese women were deprived of an education and their main duties were restricted to bearing and raising children. Initially the Society was mainly concerned with helping Chinese women who had suffered domestic violence and the breakdown of family life by offering practical, social and emotional support. Health education and promotion were also high on the agenda. Starting from 1997, the organisation extended its services to meet the needs of the Chinese elderly and their families; eventually, children and youth were also included.

In 2002, the centre became an approved UK Online Learning Centre. Over time, Wai Yin's services reached out to include other BME (Black Minority Ethnic) communities. As services continued to expand, the demand for activity space increased. Wai Yin purchased its own premises in the City Centre area of Manchester in 2010. Wai Yin has become one of the largest Chinese Community centres in the UK, sustaining its operations through commissions and contracts with mainstream organisations. The organisation changed its name from 'Wai Yin Chinese Women Society' to 'Wai Yin Society' in January 2014.

### 2. Services

Wai Yin runs services from 3 bases in Manchester and has around 1000 users every week:

- **Swan Street Headquarters:** provides services for children, young people and families, and also hosts the Learning Centre which caters for about 70% Chinese learners and 30% other BME learners.
- **Sheung Lok Centre:** provides services for older Chinese people and for older Somali women.
- **The Welcome Centre:** provides English classes, IT classes, Work Club, welfare advice, free lunches, arts and craft classes and gardening classes. It also distributes food parcels to those in greatest need. There is a job search support service for local residents in the Cheetham Hill and Crumpsall areas.

*More information on Wai Yin Society services and activities can be obtained from <https://www.waiyin.org.uk>, <https://www.facebook.com/waiyinsociety> and <https://twitter.com/waiyincws>*

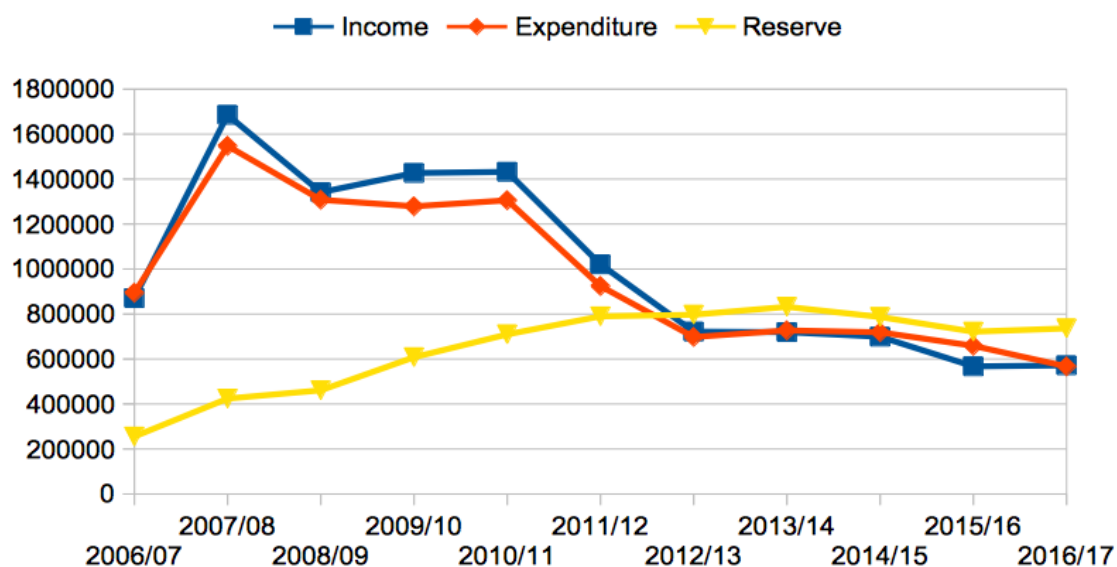
### 3. Governance, Staffing and Volunteers

Wai Yin Society has 15 board member places and is now governed by 7 female Trustees. The total number of staff in 2016/17 was 38; including 2 Chief Executive Officers, 1 Health and Social Care Manager and 1 Finance, Administration and AQS Manger.

The services are also supported by over 60 volunteers (from both Chinese and non-Chinese backgrounds) who give their time regularly. Some of the projects are volunteer-led, such as the General Advice Project and Macmillan Cancer Support. Many of the former users are now volunteers.

### 4. Finance

Wai Yin Society revenue and expenditure over the last 10 years is illustrated below.



A breakdown of revenue from Wai Yin Society Annual Report 2016/17 is given below:

Income From	£ (% of total)
Donations and Gift - Minibus Appeal	8,820 (1.54%)
<b>Charitable Activities</b>	<b>553,585 (96.78%)</b>
Other Trading Activities	2,700 (0.47%)
Investments	395 (0.07%)

Other Income	6,514 (1.14%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>572,014</b>

Financial data obtained from accounts filed in Companies House

The bulk of Wai Yin Society charitable activities have to do with physical well-being, mental health, elderly care, youth and education services. Income-generating activities included consultancy, fundraising events, room hire, photocopying and billboard hire.

## 5. Challenges, Changes and Future Outlook

The challenges and the changes made over the years are summarised below.

1. The organisation's work is mainly aimed at the Chinese community in the UK when it was established in 1988. Gradually, it welcomed all members of the community to use its services. Since 2007, service users have included those from the Indian, Pakistani, Eastern European, Bangladeshi, Somali and other communities. This transition was encouraged by the success of ETE projects, which was funded by the government. In January 2014, after consulting with staff, core volunteers and the Board, the organisation decided to change its name from 'Wai Yin Chinese Women Society' to 'Wai Yin Society'.
2. The year 2014/15 was a tough year due to austerity and cutbacks. There were a lot of funding cuts and the availability of funding applications was limited. Wai Yin had to use its reserve fund to support outgoings. The Board discussed the matter with the Senior Management Team and worked out a plan for survival: a 5-year Business Plan that focused particularly in the areas of working in partnership, developing user-focused services and sustainability. The Board reviews this plan every 3 months to make sure that Wai Yin is on target.
3. In the past 15 years, Wai Yin has diversified its funding base. Over the last few years, there has been an undercurrent of uncertainty, social and economic changes affecting Wai Yin's services, funding and resources. Despite this, Wai Yin successfully secured some external funding. In 2016/17, there were over 20 funds and contracts, with Manchester City Council and the Big Lottery Fund being the main sources. A number of contracts and grants have been secured to fund the projects for the next 3 to 7 years. Wai Yin took part in the BME Network and formed partnerships with other BME organisations. On one occasion it played a leading role in the bidding for a grant.
4. With challenge comes opportunity. Wai Yin is moving forward and working together with the Great Manchester VCSE (Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise) sector, to engage with the devolution agenda led by the Mayor of Greater Manchester. Besides, there have been new ways of working with the newly merged

Manchester University NHS Hospital Foundation Trust and Local Care Organisations. Wai Yin hopes these partnerships will enable the organisation to share knowledge and ideas that will improve, influence and shape the health and social care service in the area.

5. The task of finding substantial income to provide core services is an ongoing challenge. Wai Yin invested in a building for extra income to fund its services in March 2017. The organisation now has sufficient reserves to ensure it can meet liabilities, including 4 months of salaries and expenditure. The trustees consider that this level will provide sufficient funds to ensure that support and governance costs are covered in case of a short term drop in external funding. It is one of Wai Yin's strategic directions to transform from a charity into a social enterprise.
6. There are 15 places for Board members but currently only 7 positions are filled. Wai Yin aims to recruit new trustees to strengthen and broaden the Board's skills. Meanwhile, new pensioners are targeted as potential volunteers as they are more energetic than their predecessors.

## **Annex D: Case Study – Camden Chinese Community Centre, London**

### **1. Background**

Camden Chinese Community Centre (CCCC) was formed in 1981 and registered as a limited company and a charity in 1983. One year later, the Centre became the first Chinese charitable organisation in the UK to own its own buildings. In 2003 the Centre moved into the current Tavistock Place site which it purchased. In 2007, the Centre was contracted to manage The Great Wall Society - a Chinese sheltered housing project. The aim of CCCC is to support Chinese people living in Camden in accessing public services that were previously not available to them due to language and cultural barriers. Besides advice and advocacy and other community activities, CCCC also ran a free bilingual under-five nursery in partnership with London Borough of Camden. The nursery closed its doors in December 2016 due to a withdrawal of local government funding.

Over the years, the range of services expanded and services users nowadays are not limited to people of Chinese origin. There has also been a widening of geographical coverage of their services within the Greater London region. Besides advice service, CCCC provides a cultural centre for users and adopts a holistic approach to health and wellbeing through offering a range of activities. The Centre has over 1,300 members of whom the majority are elderly. In 2018, the council-funded disability lift was put into service.

### **2. Services**

Current services provided by Camden Chinese Community Centre are:

- Homecare services: Chinese Housebound Project (CQC approved) which provides domiciliary care services to the frail and elderly members of the Chinese community
- Elderly Project: (i) a luncheon club for the elderly 5 days a week for the promotion of social, nutritional and health welfare; (ii) managing a Chinese sheltered housing scheme at The Great Wall Society, which supports nine elderly residents in Islington with domiciliary care, meals and domestic services
- Contributory Needs Assessment Project in partnership with local authority social services and health authorities
- Advisory service: AQS accredited welfare benefits, health and housing advice service
- Community Development Project to identify the specific needs of centre users and address their needs through individual contact and various social, educational and recreational activities
- Volunteering services to escort the elderly to and from hospital/doctors surgeries, delivering meals and free interpreting service in multiple Chinese dialects

- Miscellaneous activities: trips and outings, cultural events, health talks, language courses (Mandarin, Japanese and Spanish), exercise/leisure classes (Tai Chi, painting, cookery)

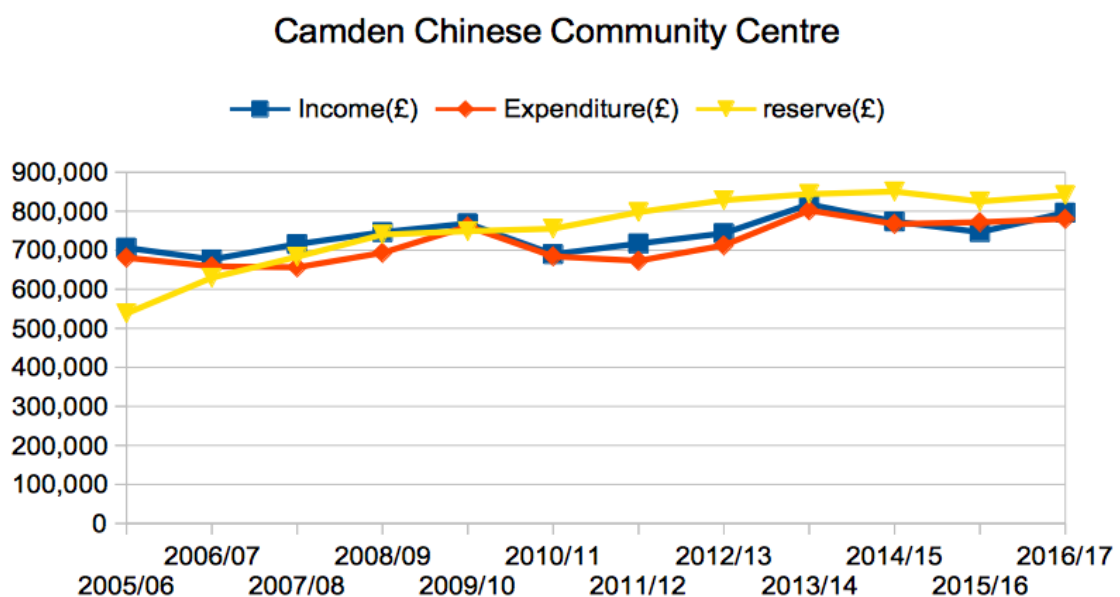
More information on Camden Chinese Community Centre services and activities can be obtained from <http://www.camdenccc.co.uk> , <https://www.facebook.com/camdenccc> and <https://twitter.com/camdenchinese>

### 3. Governance, Staffing and Volunteers

The charity is governed by its Council of Management. Currently there are 8 members. Day-to-day management is delegated to 2 full-time Centre Managers with overall responsibility for staff. In 2017, the total number of employees, including the Council of Management members, was 43. This also included 20 home care workers.

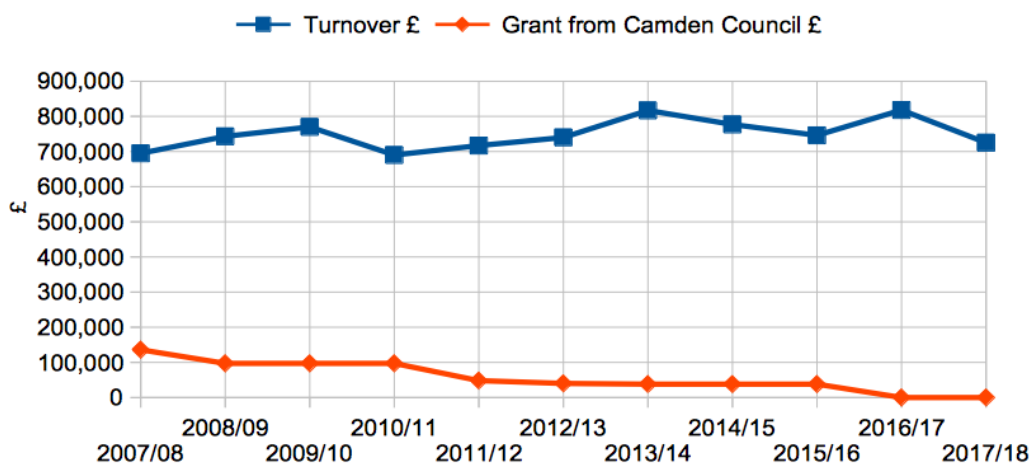
### 4. Finance

Camden Chinese Community Centre revenue and expenditure over the last 10 years is illustrated in the table below.



Financial data obtained from accounts filed in Companies House

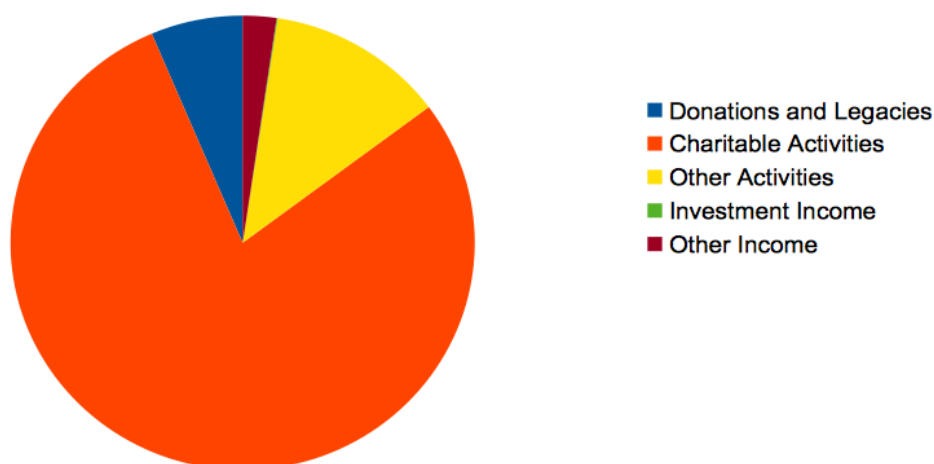
### Camden Chinese Community Centre 10 years Turnover



Source: Camden Chinese Community Centre

### A breakdown of revenue from Camden Chinese Community Centre 2016/17

Total: £796,292



Financial data obtained from accounts filed in Companies House

**\*The Housebound Project formed the largest portion of charitable activities, which was over 83%**

## 5. Challenges, Changes and Future Outlook

The challenges and the changes made over the years are summarised below.

1. CCCC continues to face challenges in terms of rising overhead costs and coping with reducing income for maintaining a diverse and quality service programme. The Centre used to run 10 projects; currently it is operating 6. The youth project is one area that has seen less growth.



2. In 2011, Camden Council withdrew much of its general funding for CCCC, reducing its support to only about £48,000 to help it run the nursery. However, since March 2016, that grant was also taken away due to changes in local policy. There was also a drop in demand for the service due to stiff competition in the wider market. The bilingual nursery closed its doors in 2016 after 20 years in operation.
3. External funding for the advocacy and advisory service and needs assessment project ended in 2014. In view of the steady demand and the difference these projects made to the quality of life for service users, CCCC decided to continue to run them through self-financing. At present these services are accessible to residents outside of the borough of Camden.
4. CCCC has more than 1,000 members while around 400-500 are active members. Like other Chinese voluntary organisations, aging membership is one of the problems the Centre needs to address. The number of elderly Chinese living in Camden remains at around 6,000 and this number has hardly changed since the 1980s. CCCC aims to attract younger pensioners and recruit them as members by providing activities suited to their tastes and needs.
5. The community centre is open throughout the weekend to provide a wide-range of leisure activities and interest classes in a bid to reduce social isolation and promote general well-being to its users. While other London community centres struggle to maintain their luncheon clubs, CCCC offers this service five days a week despite cuts in funding. Sales of dumplings, dim sum and cakes to members take place on a regular basis. These activities are popular and help to pay for other unfunded services.
6. The contracted Housebound Project provides culturally appropriate home care services to Chinese elderly. The service covers Camden, Islington and Westminster and the demand for it is high. In 2017, CCCC employed 20 home care workers. Recruiting enough care workers to meet rising demand remains a huge challenge. This project is one of the Centre's main resources of revenue.
7. The Centre is financed by a combination of self-generated income sources: domiciliary service, management of Great Wall Sheltered Housing (since 2007), rental and letting of centre space. The Centre also receives donations from members, Chinese businesses and organisations.

## Annex E: Further Reading

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