

# Growing our Global Impact

23/24

Here East Impact Report



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# Impact Report 23/24

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Words by Gavin Poole,  
CEO at Here East



# Here East: A Local Growth Story with Global Impact

As Here East continues to embrace breakthrough technologies, our sixth Impact Report reflects on the past 12 months and on our role in the ongoing transformation of East London as a home for world-changing innovations.

The last year has been a chance to reflect on what 'making an impact' really means for Here East, whether in our local community, across London more widely, throughout the country, or around the world.

Today, we are not just a campus, but part of a wider historic community and innovation district on the Olympic Park. It is a collaborative ecosystem that includes not only the incredible businesses that start and scale at Here East but also partners across the park and East Bank, including the London College of Fashion, V&A East, University College London (UCL) East, Sadler's Wells East, and BBC Music Studios.

As a collective, we have a shared responsibility to make East London an economic success. Here East is central to that, having contributed £700 million of

GVA towards GDP by 2021. It is a figure that continues to increase today as we expand our global reach, with 6,500 people now working or studying across the campus. But ours is not only a story of economic growth. It is a story of transformative academic research, new businesses starting and scaling, and international companies choosing this part of the capital to invest and grow in. Being a driver of that activity across the Olympic Park is incredibly exciting and a true testament to the global reach that we have built and the international impact we continue to have.

To position ourselves for the future, however, we need to continue to push boundaries in new areas – not least by continuing to embrace the opportunities of emerging technologies, such as AI and the metaverse. Our 'Future Talks' series has explored their potential global impact on our society, the future of cities, the entertainment industry, and much more, certifying Here East's reputation as a thought leader on how the world is changing.





Above: Gavin Poole opens the Here East Future Talks event, 'AI: Friend or Foe?'



To position ourselves for the future, however, we need to continue to push boundaries in new areas – not least by continuing to embrace the opportunities of emerging technologies."

That reputation is supported by our growing partnerships with the Capital Factory in Austin, Texas, Ann Arbor Spark in Michigan, the International Association of Science Parks and Areas of Innovation, and dynamic activations during South By South West (SXSW). We are particularly excited that this globally renowned event will come to London next year, offering a fantastic opportunity to make yet more transatlantic connections and showcase what our capital has to offer on the world stage.

We believe this city is the best in the world to do business in. It's why we work very closely with London & Partners and the Department for Business & Trade to ensure that Here East is a landing place for global companies who are looking at London and the UK as a market they want to enter.

Creating these connections is a key reason that global businesses, like Sega and Ford, base themselves at Here East. As a result, even the small businesses that are here have an international footprint.

Take Hawk London, provider of anamorphic lenses and high-end cameras. Last year, it opened a 10,000-square foot studio at Here East as the first outpost of Hawk's UK business. Today, it is a core service provider of state-of-the-art cinematography equipment to this country's film and television industry.

Here East is also home to Sir Wayne McGregor CBE, and his internationally renowned dance studio. Sir Wayne received a knighthood in the King's Birthday Honours List this year for his pioneering contribution to dance. Through progressive innovations in performance, he has radically redefined the art in the modern era, and we are proud to have Studio Wayne McGregor as such a longstanding partner. Sir Wayne's dancers and creatives take their performances all around the world, while at Here East, we house three dance studios, including two of the largest in London – opening up a world of opportunities to creatives in East London and beyond.

Another key example is the Global Innovation Disability Hub, which was a collaboration between

ourselves, Plexal, UCL and the London Legacy Development Corporation. Having started from Plexal, it is now based out of UCL East and is a global phenomenon in the development of assistive technology for people with disabilities. The World Health Organisation recognises it as a pioneer in its field, having received more than £40 million of investment from the UK government.

We also see inspiring community-led work from organisations based in Plexal, such as My Life My Say, which campaigns for democracy as a leading driver of youth engagement, and our charity partner Badu Sports, which provides opportunities and raises attainment through mentoring and participation in sport. This work matters not only on a local level but also as an exemplar for the global businesses that come to Here East. It is hoped that they can be inspired to engage with our neighbourhoods and take that learning back home.

As we continue to deliver impact in collaboration with our many partners, I hope we can also continue to act as a global inspiration. With the Paris Olympics this year, it is especially important that we demonstrate the positive success story of Here East, which the International Olympic Committee has showcased as the most successful reuse of a Broadcast and Press Centre in the modern Olympics.

Now, we get approached from around the world, with organisations asking us to talk with them about what we have done and how we have done it and help them deliver a reuse and regeneration programme on such a scale.



London Calling event hosted by Here East with London & Partners during SXSW in Austin, Texas

# Who is here

Innovators  
Developers  
Gamers  
Universities  
Charities  
Data Scientists  
Academics  
Visionaries  
Mobility Experts  
Content Creators  
Dancers  
Artists  
Retailers  
Filmmakers  
Creatives  
Esports Players  
Students  
Crafters  
Teachers  
Entrepreneurs

## Plexal

Plexal is an innovation centre and co-working space combining open innovation and a community of start-ups to help enterprises and government unlock the potential of technology.



## UCL

A joint venture between UCL's Bartlett Faculty of the Built Environment and Faculty of Engineering Sciences, this creative campus houses a unique fabrication, robotics, and prototyping facility.



## Teesside University London

Teesside University London offers a range of innovative degrees and master's courses to empower learners to effect positive impacts and innovations within a global digital economy.



## V&A East

V&A East is about celebrating global creativity, building on 150 years of heritage, transforming access to its collections, and connecting with communities in new and meaningful ways.



## Sports Interactive

Sports Interactive is the world's leading developer of football management simulations through its *Football Manager* series of games. There are more than 250 full-time team members.



## D-Ford

D-Ford is an innovation design hub of Ford Motor Company, with its UK branch based at Here East. Its philosophy is a belief in placing the customer at the centre of every design decision.



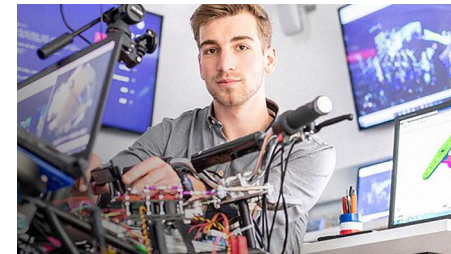
## Fiit

Fiit lets you stream interactive fitness classes. Led by the most in-demand trainers, take HIIT, combat, strength training, yoga, pilates, and breathwork classes on one simple app.



## Loughborough University London

Loughborough University London combines influential thought leaders, pioneering researchers, and creative innovators. Each degree is based on real-world issues and industry challenges.



## Hawk London

Hawk London is an industry leader in high-end cinematography. Well known in the sector, its products are highly sought after by directors of photography and those involved in film-making.



### Quadient

Quadient is a global supplier of business communication solutions that optimises sending and receiving mail, parcels, and emails. Quadient can help businesses grow and improve efficiency.



### LMA London

LMA delivers BA (Hons) degrees in the creative media, music, and performing arts sectors, with state-of-the-art facilities and esteemed tutors steeped in industry experience.



### Ford Drive

Ford Drive is an initiative of Ford Next, a division that incubates and launches new businesses that create value for Ford by complementing Ford products and creating new business models.



### Electronic Arts

Electronic Arts is a leading global interactive entertainment software company. EA delivers games, content, and online services for internet-connected consoles, personal computers, mobile phones, and tablets.



### Staffordshire University London

The institution offers a specialist selection of undergraduate and postgraduate courses designed to corner the industries of tomorrow, including games, cyber security and esports.



### The Trampery on the Gantry

The Trampery on the Gantry is a joyous experiment in utilising open space to provide 21 freestanding, low-cost, single-storey and double-storey studios for local creative businesses.



### Hobs 3D

With a host of creative services from 3D printing, model making, CGI, and VR, to high-end printing and design services, the Hobs Group boasts a comprehensive variety of creative solutions.



### Scope

Scope aims to achieve everyday equality and fairness for the 14 million people with disabilities living in Britain today. This decision was inspired by the London 2012 Paralympic legacy.



### Plykea

The Plykea workspace is an innovative showcase environment for customers and staff. Plykea specialises in designing and manufacturing beautiful custom fronts and tops for IKEA kitchens.



### Studio Wayne McGregor

Studio Wayne McGregor is a creative arts space for making and dance. It is the home of multi-award-winning choreographer Wayne McGregor CBE, and his company of dancers.



### APL Logistics

APL Logistics provides a great environment for its people and a location where the company can showcase its approach to information-driven international supply chain management.



### Barratt London

Barratt London's goal is to provide high-quality homes for Londoners, focused on excellence in design, construction, and customer service. New housing is essential to the growth of London.



# Landmark Timeline

The past 12 months have been some of the most eventful yet at Here East – in both physical and virtual reality. From launching our digital twin and imagining what comes next through our Future Talks series, to continuing to make an impact in education, employment, and empowerment alongside our partners and through our scholarship programme. We've also continued to make a global impact, returning to SXSW in Austin, Texas, while ensuring our tenants have the capacity to expand both their space at Here East and their reach around the world.

Below (June): Flavilla Fongang, Founder of 3 Colours Rules; Suhair Khan, Founder of Open-ended Design; and Emma Wright, Head of Technology, Data and Digital from law firm Harbottle and Lewis



## June

### Here East hosts 'AI: Friend of Foe?'

Our second Future Talks event asked the following question: 'AI: Friend or Foe?' It brought together experts across business, technology, the creative industries, and academia to explore future use cases of AI and discuss how the landscape is evolving.



## July

### Launch of our Virtual Twin

Here East announced the creation of the Here East Virtual Twin in partnership with digital design specialists Squint/Opera, which will provide a platform for people from across the world to visit our campus virtually.



## September

### LMA expands its space

The renowned media and performing arts institution co-owned by Robbie Williams, LMA, expanded its space at Here East, enabling it to increase the quality of its offering to students across numerous degrees on the campus.



## October

### Here East Scholarship Programme

The Here East Scholarship Programme welcomed its third cohort of students to campus, seeing them embark on courses at two of the world-class academic institutions based on site: Staffordshire University London and LMA.

Above (October): William Camara from Hackney, Selcuk Kai Zorlu from Newham, and Fawad Mughal from Waltham Forest form the third cohort of students for the Here East Scholarship Programme

# 2023



## November

### Envisioning London 2050

Our third Future Talks event convened industry leaders and futurologists to imagine what London will look like in the decades to come, diving deeper into why the capital is a leading global smart city and how it can retain its reputation.



## November

### BBC 'Any Questions?'

Here East hosted a live broadcast of one of the BBC's flagship political programmes, BBC Radio 4's 'Any Questions?', which saw a live audience quiz a panel of influential political and media figures on timely global and local issues.





FUTURE TALKS

Welcome to  
Future Talks

Mike Magan  
Chief Operating Officer, Here East

FUTURE  
TALKS

FUTURE  
TALKS

FUTURE  
TALKS





## January

### Here East hosts REMIX Summit

Here East hosted the annual REMIX Summit – a global conference where culture, technology and entrepreneurship collide – this year, focusing on exploring: ‘The Future of Culture and Creative Industries’.



## February

### ‘Is Technology Killing Entertainment?’

Our fourth Future Talks event asked the following question: ‘Is Technology Killing Entertainment?’ It brought together innovators and industry leaders to examine whether technology – specifically AI – is changing entertainment for better or worse.

Above (February): Katie Prescott and Jamie Hindhaugh share insights on how technology can aid data capture, bridge labour shortages, and enhance personalisation at the Future Talks event

Below (March): Gavin Poole, CEO at Here East, and Richard Hyde, His Majesty’s Consul General in Houston, are interviewed at London Calling, exploring the power of transatlantic bonds



## March

### Return to SXSW

During SXSW in Austin, Texas, Here East hosted ‘London Calling: Where Pioneering Ideas Meet Business Opportunities’ in collaboration with London & Partners, exploring the power of transatlantic bonds between London and the US.



## April

### Here East host Future Frontiers

Here East hosted ‘Future Frontiers’ in collaboration with Tech London Advocates, bringing innovators, entrepreneurs, investors, and tech leaders together in Plexal to explore the future of London’s tech sector ahead of the mayoral election.



## June

### Badu becomes our charity partner

In June 2024, Here East announced a new and exciting charity partnership with Badu, joining forces to tackle child poverty in the local London growth boroughs and make a tangible difference to the lives of vulnerable children.



## June

### Diversity in Tech: Create Your Own Pathway

In collaboration with Hackney Council, Here East hosted the ‘Diversity in Tech: Power to Create Your Own Pathway’ event, exploring how East London’s young innovators can carve out unique pathways into tech careers.

# 2024

# Making an Impact

Even as we extend our global reach, it remains at the absolute core of what we do to ensure that the locals in East London benefits positively from Here East. Among our community impact this year, we have signed a new charity partnership with Badu Sports, seen our first cohort of scholars graduate, and continued to reach out into local schools in collaboration with the councils of the growth boroughs. Read more on all of this from our community and partnerships manager, Onaba Payab.



PREMIUM REG. QUALITY  
TRADE MARK  
**OFFICIAL HOMME**  
EST. 13  
EST. SINCE 2013

# Education, employment and engagement: Here East's community impact

Words by Onaba Payab,  
Community and Partnerships  
Manager at Here East

While Here East's impact and influence on a global scale continue to increase, local community engagement remains at the very heart of what we do. Over the past 12 months, we have continued to develop the offering for our schools programme, with more than 500 students from local schools coming to Here East in 2023/24 – something that has never happened before on such a scale.

Importantly, we have strengthened our relationship with both Hackney Council and Newham Council, who partner with us to recruit local people into vacancies across campus. That was a vision that we wanted to achieve as part of the Olympic legacy and one that we feel has been a success.

The unique nature of Here East's educational and employment offering – both directly with us, or indirectly with our tenants – means that we create a cycle of opportunity for our community. It allows us to have touchpoints with the community from school, through university, to employment. Just look at Olivia Eastwood-Gray, the Loughborough University London alumna spotlighted in this report.



Above: An event to celebrate Here East and Badu becoming charity partners





Left: Experiencing VR at the Project Hackney Post 16 Roadshow  
Bottom right: Here East and Badu become charity partners, joining forces to reduce child poverty in the local growth boroughs



**Together, we will be focusing on families and increasing the provision of youth services, to try and help more young people into further or higher education."**

We are very excited that recently, we confirmed Badu Sports as our official charity partner. It reaffirms our deep commitment to social responsibility and our desire to make a tangible difference to people's lives. Through this collaboration, we can improve our support to the borough of Hackney, which has one of the highest rates of child poverty in London.

Together, we will be focusing on families and increasing the provision of youth services to try and help more young people get into further or higher education. We will look to implement joint initiatives tackling inactivity resulting from a lack of sporting opportunities that exist within these communities. This is not just about health but giving young people an outlet and a safe space. Badu's work over many years demonstrates a direct link between exercise and a reduction in crime, as well as unemployment.

While we have worked closely with Badu Sports over many years, this new partnership formalises our relationship and commits us to achieving set objectives, so that we can deliver a more tangible impact.

We have also been continuing to work with Hackney Council on developing our Diversity in Tech commission, which has been ongoing for three years now. As part of London Tech Week 2024, we ran an event, 'Power to Create Your Own Pathway', which focused on driving awareness among local residents of the courses and jobs available at Here East's universities and our tenants, respectively.

Of course, the impact of Here East is not only about what we do; it is about the amazing work of our tenants' and partners. Plexal and Sports Interactive, for example, have wonderful internships and apprenticeship programmes that are leading to more

opportunities for young people. Meanwhile, Ford conducts summer boot camps for local schools, giving those students the opportunity to meet with their team members to understand the roles available with one of the world's biggest companies.

Studio Wayne McGregor this year is also delivering its Resident 6 programme – a fellowship that brings six local artists into the space to work on their projects. It is a perfect example of what Here East offers the community: local space and resources for local creatives.

All of this work is a part of our commitment to breaking down barriers and opening up opportunities to those who may not otherwise have had them. As such, we are continuing to recruit new students for the Here East scholarship programme, which is going into its fourth year in 2024/25. It is particularly exciting that two of the students from our very first cohort of scholars are graduating this summer.

I have loved watching these amazing students – as well as the scholars that have followed in their footsteps since – develop not only academically but also as people. We feel a duty to ensure that they not only experience the breadth of opportunity available to them at Here East but that they are best prepared to enter the workplace. Through insights sessions and mentoring, we make sure they are equipped with soft skills that will help them in the future, such as communication, confidence, and team building.

Through programmes like these, we can help to bridge the skills gap in our communities, benefiting both local employers and the wider economy.



# Tenant Spotlight

For Here East, making a global impact is not only about our own work but also what our tenants are able to achieve. This report is our annual opportunity to celebrate what they do and to spotlight the different ways in which they make a positive contribution. Whether that is through creating opportunities for young people in the local community to achieve their dreams or collaborating on research and transformative technology that might change the way we see the world.







## Loughborough University

Professor Nick Jennings,  
Vice-Chancellor, Loughborough University



We want our research to get out there, beyond scholarly publication, to change people's lives and be used to improve society and the planet."

Read more on Pg 18



## Loughborough University

Olivia Eastwood-Gray,  
NFL, Loughborough University alumna



There's so many great businesses based here, so it is really important to unlock the time to connect with other students, lecturers, and industry experts."

Read more on Pg 20



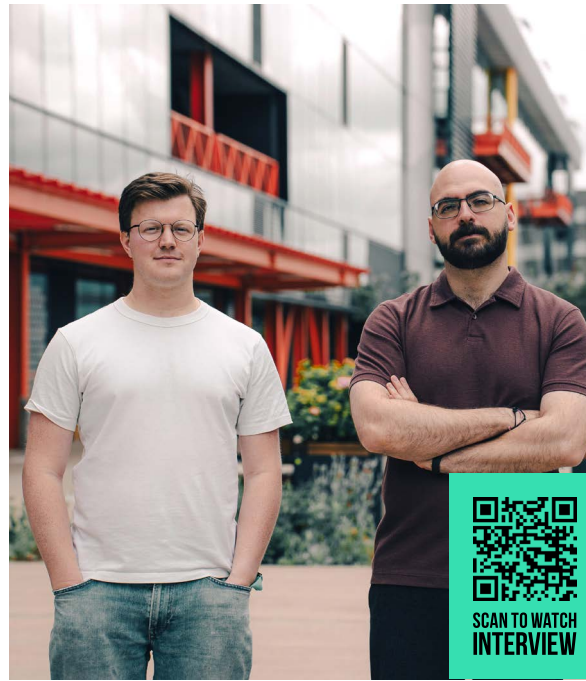
## Sports Interactive

Harvey Palmer and Nathanael Hondi,  
Junior Software Engineers at Sports Interactive



As well as a senior developer who has acted as my mentor, I was introduced to the entire team in week one, who have always been willing to help."

Read more on Pg 22



## Panda Surgical

George Dwyer and Manios Dimitrakakis,  
Robotics Engineer and CEO at Panda Surgical



More surgeons will have the ability to perform these intricately complex surgeries, resulting in more patients having improved outcomes and access."

Read more on Pg 24



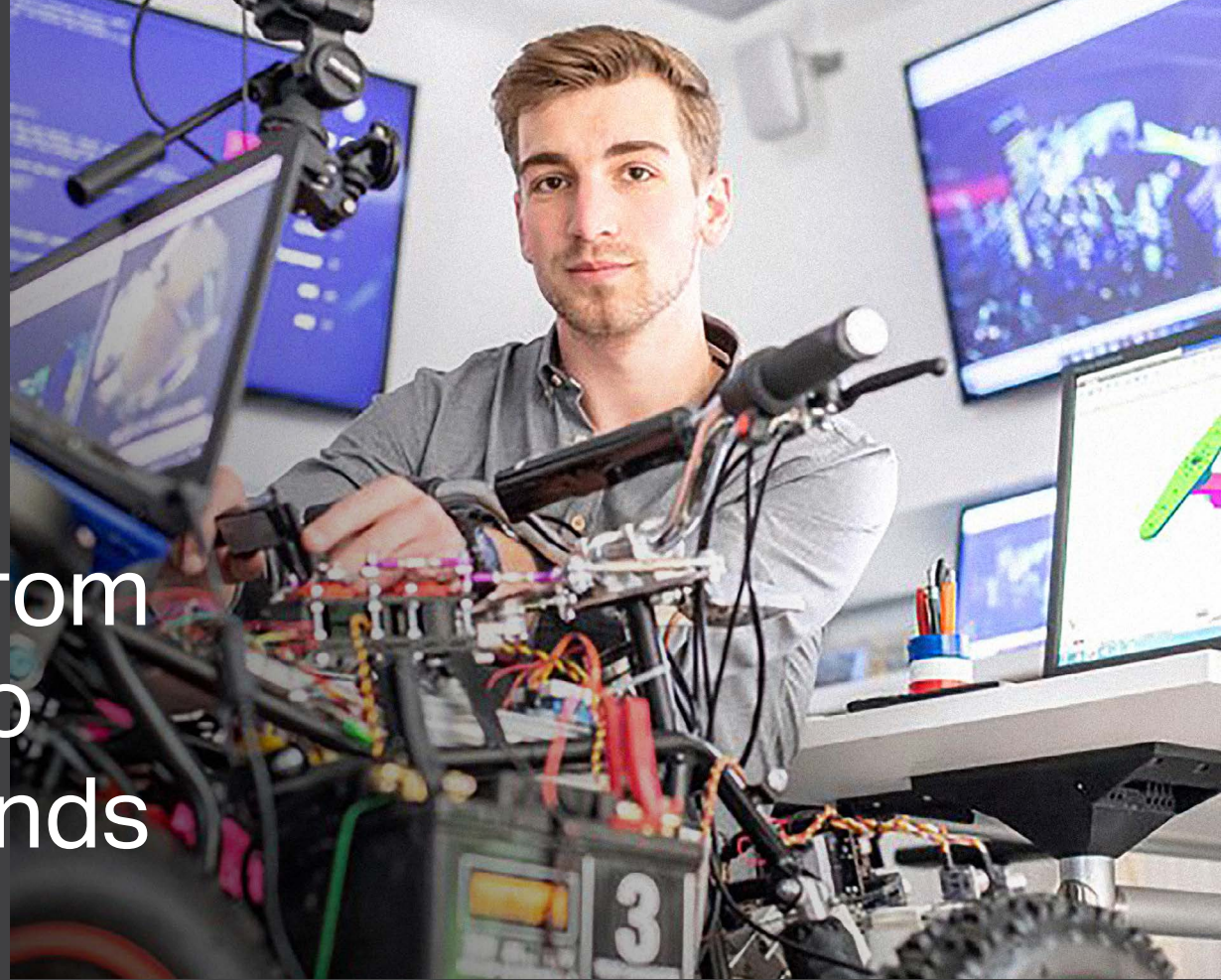
## Plexal

Andrew Roughan,  
CEO at Plexal



Plexal continued to scale throughout 2023 and the first half of 2024. We now employ 92 people across seven locations and work with 26 different clients."

Read more on Pg 26



# Partnerships from East London to the East Midlands

Words by Professor Nick Jennings,  
Vice-Chancellor, Loughborough University



Loughborough University London is a postgraduate-only campus based at Here East focusing on multidisciplinary research and education in areas from AI and sport to creative industries and technologies. These both connect to, and complement, our provision in the East Midlands.

Our programmes in London have key common strengths across areas such as digital skills, technology, media, and entrepreneurship. As the Vice-Chancellor of a leading UK university, and as an AI researcher for my entire professional career, I want to make sure that Loughborough is at the forefront of innovation and future-focused developments. Loughborough's forward-looking approach, which

puts the latest research and developments at the heart of our offering, is what makes Here East a perfect partner. Our curriculum connects to the Here East campus and wider Olympic Park.

There is no better example of this than our Collaborative programme, which takes real-world organisational problems from local startups like Beryl Bikes, multinationals like Ford, and charities like Red January, enabling students from multiple disciplines to collaborate and provide innovative solutions to these problems.

This and many other activities give our students access to a burgeoning ecosystem of opportunities that prepare them for their future careers.

Professor Nick Jennings, Vice-Chancellor,  
Loughborough University



**I believe it is our role as a university to develop positive and purposeful relationships that make a difference to the world, – whether that is in the East Midlands or East London, nationally, or on the international stage – so that our impact is felt around the world and we can create better futures, together.”**

In turn, this allows us to deliver on a significant aim within our university strategy, which I know is also central to Here East’s mission: meaningful partnerships. Loughborough believes in creating better futures together. Central to this is the belief that we will always achieve more when we work in partnership, and this speaks to how we collaborate with industry; with businesses large and small; with government; with charities; and with a range of other stakeholders, including other universities.

For example, the creation of the Global Disability Innovation Hub – a now £80m organisation – has enabled us to work collaboratively with UCL, government, tech businesses, and disability rights organisations to drive activity across the globe that improves the lives of people with disabilities.

Specifically, our researchers were part of enabling the broadcast of the Tokyo Paralympics across 49 Sub-Saharan African countries for the first time. This partnership, and the positive impact it has created, would not have been achieved without our base within Here East.

Innovation runs through Loughborough’s veins, and a focus on fostering entrepreneurship and brave innovation is central to our approaches to both innovation and research and learning and teaching. To this end, we recently launched Midlands Mindforge with seven other research-intensive universities in the Midlands region. Mindforge aims to accelerate the commercialisation of university spinouts and IP-rich businesses in the Midlands, transforming groundbreaking science and technology into successful businesses with real-world impact.

This focus on positive impact is critical for Loughborough. Earlier this year, we launched a campaign to underscore our position as a bold, ambitious university that uses its strengths and purposeful partnerships to make change for a better world. The campaign is called ‘The World Can’t Wait’, and it underlines the pressing need for us to address the issues that face us all, now and in the future.

Universities are incredibly important to the UK. We have a profile and stellar reputation around the world, as well as a significant economic impact, contributing 750,000 jobs and £130 billion to the UK economy. It is therefore important that, at a time when the sector has been under fire, we are on the front foot in talking about how universities like Loughborough

make a positive contribution to society. Loughborough has always been a university that cares about impact. We want our research to get out there, beyond scholarly publication, to change people’s lives and be used to improve society and the planet. That is why our partnerships matter: because they allow us to turn much of the research happening at the university into innovations with scalable potential.

It is perhaps unsurprising that, as the world’s best university for sports-related subjects, sporting partnerships are also very important for us. Loughborough has been working with Adidas for around 20 years on everything from testing the design of footballs for the World Cup and European Championships to foot and leisure wear with innovative designs that keep athletes cool. In London, we are building on this work by investigating the impact of social media on athletes, hand in hand with tech startups like Signify.

The partnerships and initiatives highlighted here are just some examples of where our approach to partnership, coupled with world-leading research and innovation, is delivering significant positive impact. I believe it is our role as a university to develop positive and purposeful relationships that make a difference to the world – whether that is in the East Midlands or East London, nationally, or on the international stage – so that our impact is felt around the world and we can create better futures, together.





# // This place is just a part of who I am"

Words by Olivia Eastwood-Gray,  
NFL, Loughborough University alumna

I am proud to say that I have not only lived in East London my entire life but also most of my academic and professional experiences have been centred here. This area is a huge part of who I am.

My career started with Badu Sports, based at Here East, working on community projects and unlocking opportunities for young people. It was full circle for me, having grown up in Hackney and known Badu's founder, Nana, since I was just 11-years-old.

While working at Badu, I chose to pursue a master's degree at Loughborough University London – something that only happened because I was part of the amazing Here East community.



Olivia Eastwood-Gray,  
NFL, Loughborough University alumna

Right: Students from Teesside University London, UCL, Loughborough University London, Staffordshire University London, and LMA enjoying Freshers Fest hosted on the Here East campus



**“The global reputation and connections of both the university and Here East helped open the door to multiple opportunities.”**

Ultimately, the only word I can use to describe these two experiences and being part of this Here East network is invaluable. I am keen to continue giving back to the students in this community.

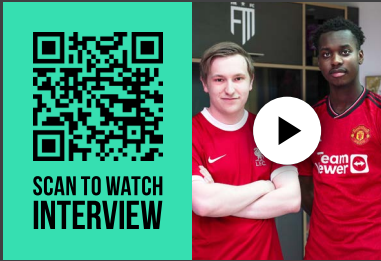
I am proud to be regularly asked to come back to Loughborough University London and share my story to potentially help impact or inform others – even if that’s only one person.

When I come back to Here East, I always try to make the most of the experience and of what’s on offer. I encourage current Loughborough students to do the same as there are so many great brands and businesses based here and nearby. Thus, it is really important to unlock the time to connect with other students, lecturers, and industry experts.

My time at Loughborough also provided the spark for my new career with the NFL, where I now work in commercial partnerships, specifically looking at new business across the UK and Germany. I’m hopeful this will broaden as we continue to grow our sport internationally. The global reputation and connections of both the university and Here East helped open the door to multiple opportunities.

For Here East to continue inspiring people and making an impact, I think it’s important to celebrate the stories of the people who pass through it every day and the pipeline of talent it creates from the local community, to its universities, to the amazing businesses based there – and the opportunities that this provides far beyond the campus.





# Sports Interactive: Transferring knowledge and developing talent

Sports Interactive (SI) is best known for producing the iconic *Football Manager* series. Celebrating its 30th anniversary this year, it is at the forefront of bringing new talent into the gaming industry.

"We have our own in-house games engine that has been built up over the entire history of making *Football Manager*," explains Jamie Stewart, Developer Advocate at Sports Interactive. "Some of the code files go back to the 90s! And we have an experienced team that knows the ins and outs of that base. But as an annually released title, we need to make sure we are regularly bringing in new talent so that knowledge is passed on."

SI's year-long internship programme is designed to ensure that students are schooled in the company's programming language. "Many of the major games studios, including us, use C++, which isn't what they are likely to learn at university," Jamie says. "So, what we do is feed that knowledge back into their courses, which will be incredibly useful for when they are applying for future roles."



Nathanael Hondi, Junior Software Engineer at Sports Interactive



Above: Staffordshire University London students studying on the Here East campus



Above: People enjoying Here East's annual Merry Making event in The Yard

“  
Two things really stick out to me. Firstly, providing feedback to some of the university students on their business development pitches. Secondly, Here East's Merry Making event out in The Yard at Christmas time. I got to speak to many different people from around the campus and learn more about what they do.”

Nathanael Hondi is one of SI's 2023/24 interns working as a junior software engineer in the gameplay team. He explains the key skills he's learned through the internship: "As well as a senior developer who has acted as my mentor, I was introduced to the entire team in week one, who have always been willing to help, review my code, and give feedback on my work. I can now take the initiative and fix bugs on my own. That gives me really helpful transferable skills for my future career, whether at SI, another games studio, or as an independent developer."

Jamie emphasises that learning is simply part of the internship experience. "We can teach people to code; we don't expect our interns to know everything. What we're looking for in our applicants is communication skills."

While it is most important that interns pick up skills from SI's more senior engineers, the knowledge exchange goes both ways. "Because our team members have spent their careers on C++, when it came to using another programming language, another of our interns, Harvey, was able to step in and help," Jamie says. "Suddenly, some of our most senior staff were coming to him for advice and feedback."

Harvey Palmer's eye for detail made him an ideal candidate to work in the rule groups team at SI, programming the vastly complex and varied formats of the world's football leagues and competitions. This led to the opportunity to work on one of *Football Manager's* new licences for its most recent release, the Japanese 'J League'. "It was really fun to do something so forward facing. I was proud that I was trusted with the responsibility of a new licence for the game," Harvey says.

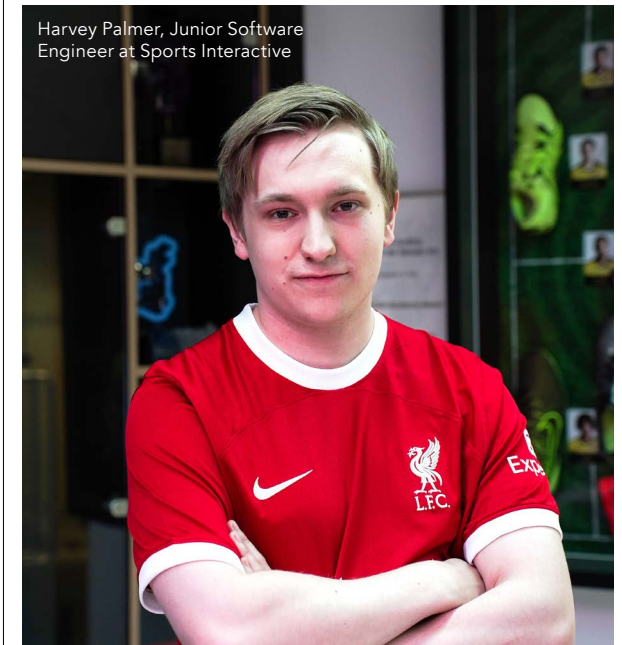
The cycle of feedback means that interns like Harvey and Nathanael can get closely involved in supporting the company's wider outreach, such as its relationship with East London Arts and Music (ELAM), a college in one of the key growth boroughs close to Here East. SI works closely with ELAM's games design students on CV and portfolio reviews, and an end-of-year showcase. From there, the studio takes in one student each year as a summer intern for six weeks.

Just a few years ago, Nathanael was a student at ELAM himself, being mentored by one of SI's previous junior software engineers. This led him to secure a summer internship. Today, he takes on that same role for ELAM's current students.

SI and its interns also support students at the universities based at Here East, particularly Staffordshire University London and Loughborough University London. The team provides mentoring, mock interviews, and feedback on pitching. "That's been one of the main benefits of working at Sports Interactive and being based at Here East," says Nathanael. "We have a lot of interaction with different companies, and I had the opportunity to organise and give feedback on mock interviews to some of Loughborough's students."

Harvey also made the most of the Here East experience. Remembering his highlights of the year, he says: "Two things really stick out to me. Firstly, providing feedback to some of the university students on their business development pitches. Secondly, Here East's Merry Making event out in The Yard at Christmas time. I got to speak to many different people from around the campus and learn more about what they do."

Supporting young talent is a core mission for both Sports Interactive and Here East. The two organisations will continue working together to bring students from East London onto the campus.



Harvey Palmer, Junior Software Engineer at Sports Interactive





# Panda Surgical: Shaping the future of surgery through robotics



Above: Panda Surgical demonstrate their robotics technology shaping the future of surgery

Panda Surgical is a spin out from University College London (UCL) that harnesses the power of next generation robotics and AI to make neurosurgery safer and more effective. It was born from a research project by co-founders Professor Danail Stoyanov, Dr Hani Marcus, and Dr Manios Dimitrakakis and is now based in UCL's research facilities at Here East.

With its state-of-the-art technology, Panda Surgical has developed the first ever handheld robotic device for minimally invasive neurosurgery, aiming to reduce the risks and boost adoption of these vital procedures.

"When neurosurgeons want to remove tumours and other abnormalities from deep within the skull and spine in a safe manner, they have to manipulate tissue through very long, narrow corridors using channels such as the nose, the eyes, or tiny artificial holes on the patient's head or back. Although

keyhole neurosurgery is less dangerous than open neurosurgery, it can still be challenging for surgeons to navigate the restricted space and manipulate the tumour effectively with currently available instruments," explains Manios, Panda Surgical's CEO.

"This tool can allow surgeons to improve more quickly, as they can reach more tumours," adds the spin out's Senior Robotics Engineer, Dr George Dwyer.

With enhanced dexterity and control, the devices allow surgeons to penetrate deep pockets, confined spaces, and previously unreachable places in the human body to remove tumours effectively and safely. When coupled with the company's AI platform, these cutting-edge tools empower surgeons to perform delicate manoeuvres and remove higher quantities of tumours with less risks and more precision.

Currently at the preclinical stage, Panda Surgical has not tested its instruments on live patients yet.



George Dwyer, Robotics Engineer at Panda Surgical



Manios Dimitrakakis,  
CEO at Panda Surgical

However, having now secured seed investment, and after having conducted extensive evaluations of human cadavers and simulations, Manios hopes to be able to complete the company's first human trial within the next year or so: "Because our solution is inexpensive and very easy to learn, we think it can be seamlessly incorporated into the operative theatre. This will mean more surgeons will have the ability to perform these intricately complex surgeries, resulting in more patients having improved outcomes and access to these procedures."

Being part of Here East's innovation ecosystem has been invaluable for Panda Surgical, helping the company forge vital industry connections and fuel its business and technical development – especially in terms of finding quick advice on technical matters from other businesses on campus.

"Generally, when you want to have a chat with people, they're more than happy to talk things through and tell you their opinion on things," says George.

"Collaborating in the wider Here East environment has been great for us," adds Manios. "We are a tiny startup, so every interaction we're able to have with more experienced experts or people who have done this before is very important for us.

"It also helps that we're located in a very vibrant area of London, which makes it very easy to entice partners, investors, and talent to come to us."

Panda Surgical hopes to attract these investors to ensure that its innovative solution can be scaled: "We think our technology can have a massive global impact because the problems we are tackling are present all around the world."

Aiming to improve endoscopic neurosurgery on a global scale, Panda's team of five is set to grow very soon, which will assist in accelerating development and conduct the first in-human clinical trial as soon as possible. Following this, the startup will look to target different markets around the world and obtain regulatory approval.

"Our next major steps are clinical trials," says George, "we want to be developing this instrument and getting it into patients as quickly as possible to try and improve surgery."

"After that, we hope we will be able to obtain regulatory approval in order to place systems in hospitals around the world," says Manios. "We want to try and help as many people as we can."



# Plexal's partnership approach

Words by Andrew Roughan,  
CEO at Plexal



We now employ 92  
people across seven  
locations and work with  
26 different clients."





Andrew Roughan,  
CEO at Plexal



**One particular partnership that stood out for me this year was between Safetech innovations – a global cybersecurity company that is investing and growing in the UK through Plexal – and CarbonQuota, which runs systems and tools to measure carbon emissions in supply chains.”**

Plexal continued to scale throughout 2023 and the first half of 2024. We now employ 92 people across seven locations and work with 26 different clients. That’s a 50% growth in terms of people and customers in the last 12 months alone.

Those clients vary from small startups to some of the largest organisations in the world, including Google, Airbus, and the UK government.

We act as an innovation consultancy to the government, and our offering is something that I consider to be unique. We are first and foremost, a physical space. That means we are a place where innovation happens, surrounded by the energy and dynamism of incredible private sector startups. This gives us the credibility to make an impact on the science and technology policy agenda and support government-led innovation.

We then take inspiration for everything that has been created at Plexal and Here East to build innovation clusters around the country. This can affect even more policy areas, beyond science and technology, from supporting the national redistribution of wealth and increasing productivity across the country, to increasing international trade and securing supply chains.

By working closely with the civil service to help deliver on its priorities, sharing in its mission, and ensuring we do not favour any one party, we have become a trusted partner to government. As a result, we have created the permission structures and the access to influence the public sector, as well as the private sector organisations that support them, creating a value exchange between public and private, academia and investors, companies large and small. Beyond providing support for our clients, we remain a close partner to our ever-growing membership at Plexal – organisations of all shapes and sizes.

From My Life My Say, which is focused on driving youth participation in politics, to Canopy, a spinout division of Ford Motor Company releasing products for vehicle security, to name just two.

Witnessing the journey of these growing companies with rich ideas and agile development pathways, where innovation happens really quickly is something that makes me extremely proud. But what excites me the most is seeing the sparks of new ideas among our members and watching these turn into successful products.

One particular partnership that stood out for me this year was between Safetech innovations, a global cybersecurity company that is investing and growing in the UK through Plexal – and CarbonQuota, which runs systems and tools to measure carbon emissions in supply chains.

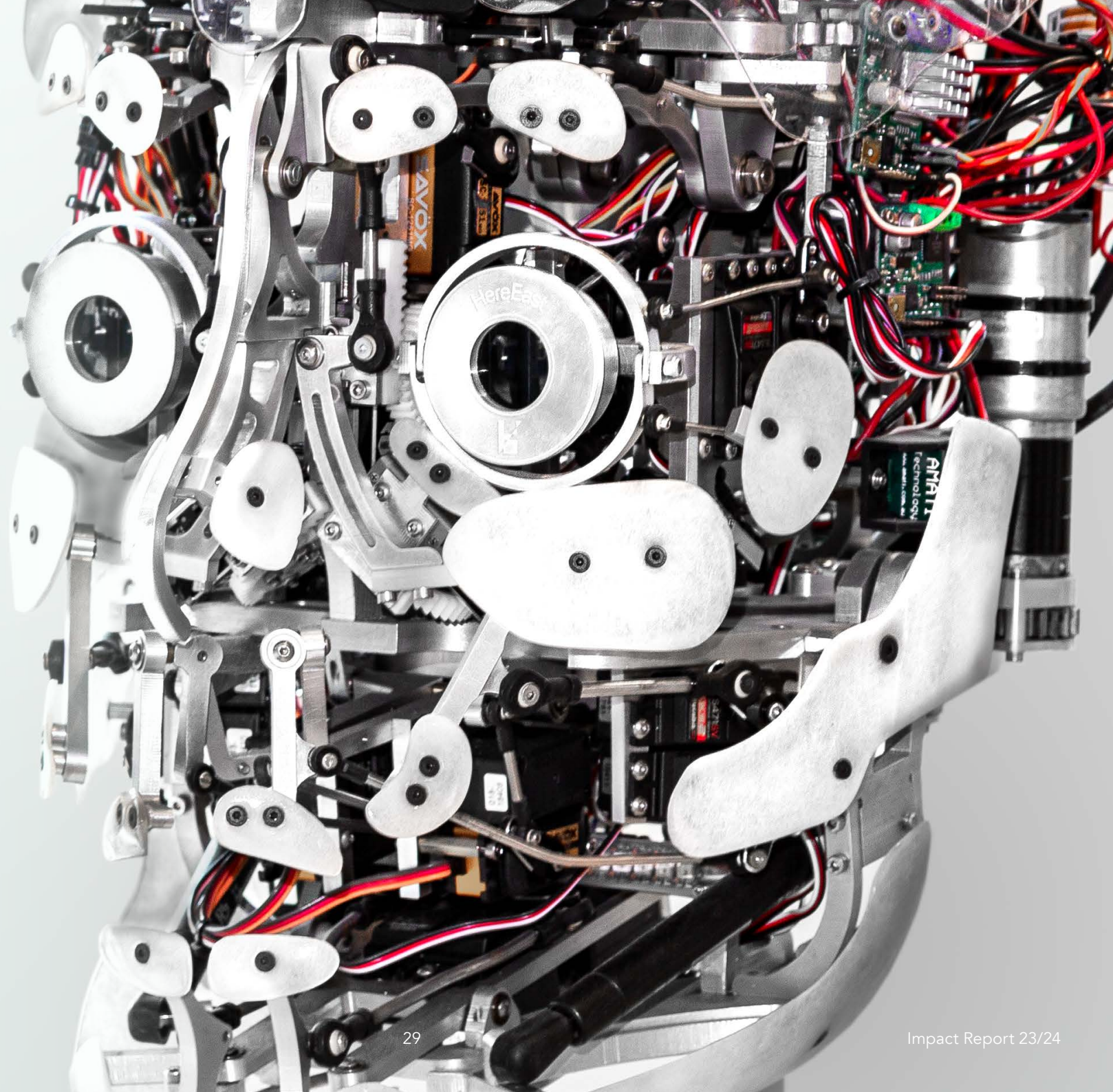
For Safetech, that partnership validates its position in the UK market and gives the company a baseline from which to grow, ultimately leading to a greater investment in people and facilities. While CarbonQuota’s day to day is focused on powering a net zero mission, it must also think about the structure and longevity of its business, to which cybersecurity is absolutely vital, particularly when it comes to securing its customers’ supply chains.

Partnerships like these, alongside our continued growth, helps us reflect on how far Plexal has come since the 2012 Olympic Games and the initial inspiration Gavin and I had to put this innovation ecosystem at the heart of Here East. It is a fantastic case study of collaboration and clustering that we are now seeing organisations around the world looking to replicate. It’s up to us to help them to do it using the model and method we’ve created here.



# Future Vision

This report aims to provide a sense of the extent to which Here East is helping to shape the future – both at home and around the world. This campus was set up to nurture talent and innovation, and that is exactly what we continue to do today. As the Olympic Park and East Bank around us also continue to grow and this part of London becomes more enticing to investors and international companies, we hope to continue positioning Here East as a place that has global significance and an impact that can be felt the world over.





Words by Mike Magan,  
COO at Here East

# Turning today's ideas into tomorrow's impact

“

I'm proud of what we've accomplished so far in 2024, but with our sights set firmly on the horizon, I'm also excited to see how we'll push the boundaries further in this next chapter.”

As an emblem of London's Olympic legacy, a committed neighbour to our local community, and a microcosm of the capital's growing innovation ecosystem, there are many reasons why 2024 is a memorable year for Here East.

This summer, the Olympic Games will take place in Paris, convening athletes and spectators from across the world in France's iconic capital. While this will lay the foundation for Paris' Olympic legacy, it will also turn the world's attention to our own legacy on the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park and put Here East into the global spotlight as the former Press and Broadcast Centre for London's 2012 Games. We're excited to see how Paris will harness this legacy to deliver a

long-lasting positive impact for the city and beyond – just like we have accomplished here in East London.

Another hallmark of 2024 is the anticipation felt across our campus as we prepare for the opening of the V&A Storehouse early next year. The opening will tie us closer to the East Bank and the new V&A East museum. Working closely together ahead of the grand opening, it's been exciting to see the V&A's national collection come to Here East alongside an incredible array of artefacts – including a unique collection of David Bowie photography, album artwork, and memorabilia.

We're also looking forward to the next instalment of our Future Talks series coming to life.





Left: Amelia Kallman, London Futurist talks at Here East's Future Talks event; Envisioning London 2050  
Below: Diversity in Tech event in collaboration with Hackney Council hosted at Plexal



**Innovation, collaboration and community are the foundation upon which Here East was founded a decade ago. These remain our golden threads; binding our mission to deliver shared prosperity across East London and beyond."**

Harnessing Here East's convening power, these forward-looking events offer a unique opportunity to gather local people alongside world-leading experts to question the issues shaping tomorrow and share ideas on how to navigate them.

So far, we've explored whether AI is a friend or foe, what the point of the metaverse is, if technology is killing entertainment, and what London might look like in 2050. As emerging technologies continue to disrupt and evolve, we will keep leaning into this landscape at the cutting edge of new global trends, challenging the status quo and embracing the transformative power of technology. We'll continue to focus on driving a positive impact closer to home, cementing our

partnership with the local community. Whether that takes shape as our Here East Scholarship Programme, nurturing the next generation of innovators; or our Diversity in Tech event in collaboration with Hackney Council, helping young people carve out career paths into tech.

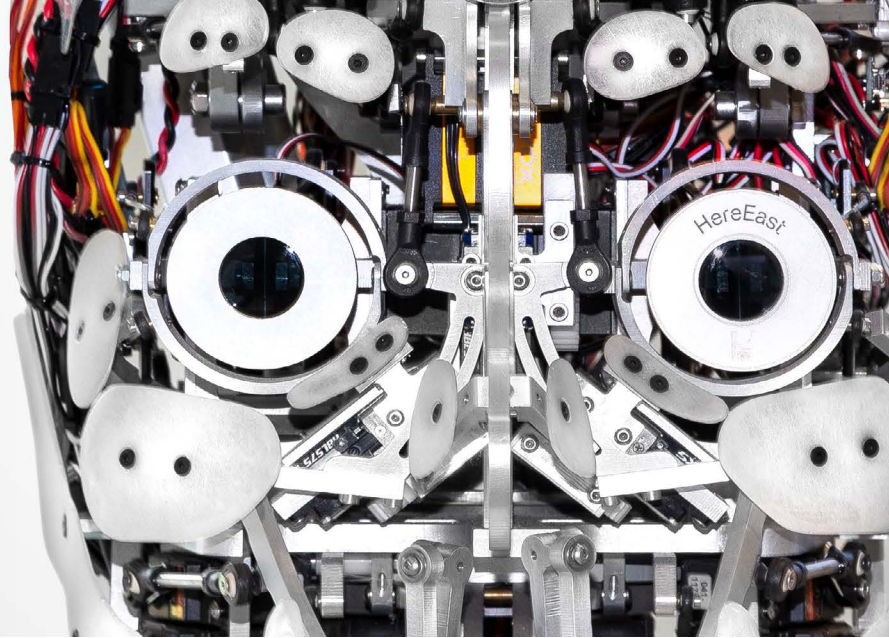
Innovation, collaboration, and community are the foundation upon which Here East was founded a decade ago. These remain our golden threads; binding our mission to deliver shared prosperity across East London and beyond. I'm proud of what we've accomplished so far in 2024, but with our sights set firmly on the horizon, I'm also excited to see how we'll push the boundaries further in this next chapter.





# Listen to what we have to say...

Want to find out more about Here East, our tenants, and our partners? Visit us at [hereeast.com](https://hereeast.com) to see who's here, what's on and to hear more from the people spotlighted in this report.



Scan the QR code to watch all the interviews online

[hereeast.com/about/impact-report-23-24](https://hereeast.com/about/impact-report-23-24)



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**Gavin Poole:** Here East: A local growth story with global impact



**Nick Jennings:** Partnerships from East London to the East Midlands



**Sports Interactive:** Transferring knowledge and developing talent



**Olivia Eastwood-Gray:** 'This place is just a part of who I am'



**Panda Surgical:** Shaping the future of surgery through robotics



**Andrew Roughan:** Plexal's partnership approach



**Mike Magan:** Turning today's ideas into tomorrow's impact