

some  
light



① sometime-y  
spaces

② boys also  
take care

③ safety  
& health

④ choice,  
freedom,  
poverty



These are the messages, thoughts, and findings of Lorraine, a resident and citizen social scientist from Gascoyne Estate.

Lorraine conducted research on the obstacles to prosperity that residents in Gascoyne Estate experience, as part of the *Prosperity in east London 2021-2031 Longitudinal Study*.

To find out more about Lorraine and *Prosperity in east London 2021-2031*, take a look at the final pages of this zine.

Before you enter the estate, you'll notice there are two lampposts – the functions of these are 'sometime-y':

- works one at a time
- doesn't work at all
- dim yellow lighting

- Lorraine



# ① sometime-y spaces

The lamppost at the corner of your street, lighting the way as you go about your evening - like air, it's light is so essential you forget you need it till it's missing. In Gascoyne Estate, people are always aware of the importance of light, safety, and rubbish-free corners because they are frequently missing - "sometime-y" as Lorraine describes it.

For Lorraine, this is linked to Gascoyne Estate being a lower-income housing area. Unlike the bright lights, well-maintained facilities, and clean spaces she often sees in higher-income neighbourhoods, Lorraine felt that infrastructure in Gascoyne Estate suffered from poor maintenance and inadequacy.

Poverty leads to sometime-y spaces, as fluctuations and lulls in institutional care, attention, and funding become reflected in the patchy infrastructure and environment of social housing estates.

lampost not  
working



broken lamppost ●



2nd lamppost  
that works ●

Walking home through the estate in complete darkness and having to use the light on my phone to go through. All the landing lights were off. I enter the estate from the front (Harrowgate Road entrance) to find that the two lamp posts aren't working or partially lit



- Lorraine



## ② boys also take care

The effects of dim lighting and disrepair were especially worrying for young women like Lorraine, who feared for their safety. Lorraine spoke to another young woman in her community, who recounts growing up with poor lighting:

“The lighting in Gascoyne Estate has always been an issue, my mum was never comfortable with me being out at certain hours of the day”

- Isabelle

Boys weren't spared either. Young men had to be careful of theft, stabbings, and physical violence as they walked through the estate late at night. For young people in Gascoyne Estate, dim lighting and high crime rates go hand-in-hand. The menace and potential danger of the dark is always real because of the stories, newspaper headlines and neighbours they know who were robbed, assaulted, stabbed.



dim  
corners

walking home at  
night with phone  
lighting



## ③ safety & health

Lorraine's favourite place in the world is her room, because, as she explains: "it's a space for me to be creative, it's a space for me to rest, it's a safe haven for me".

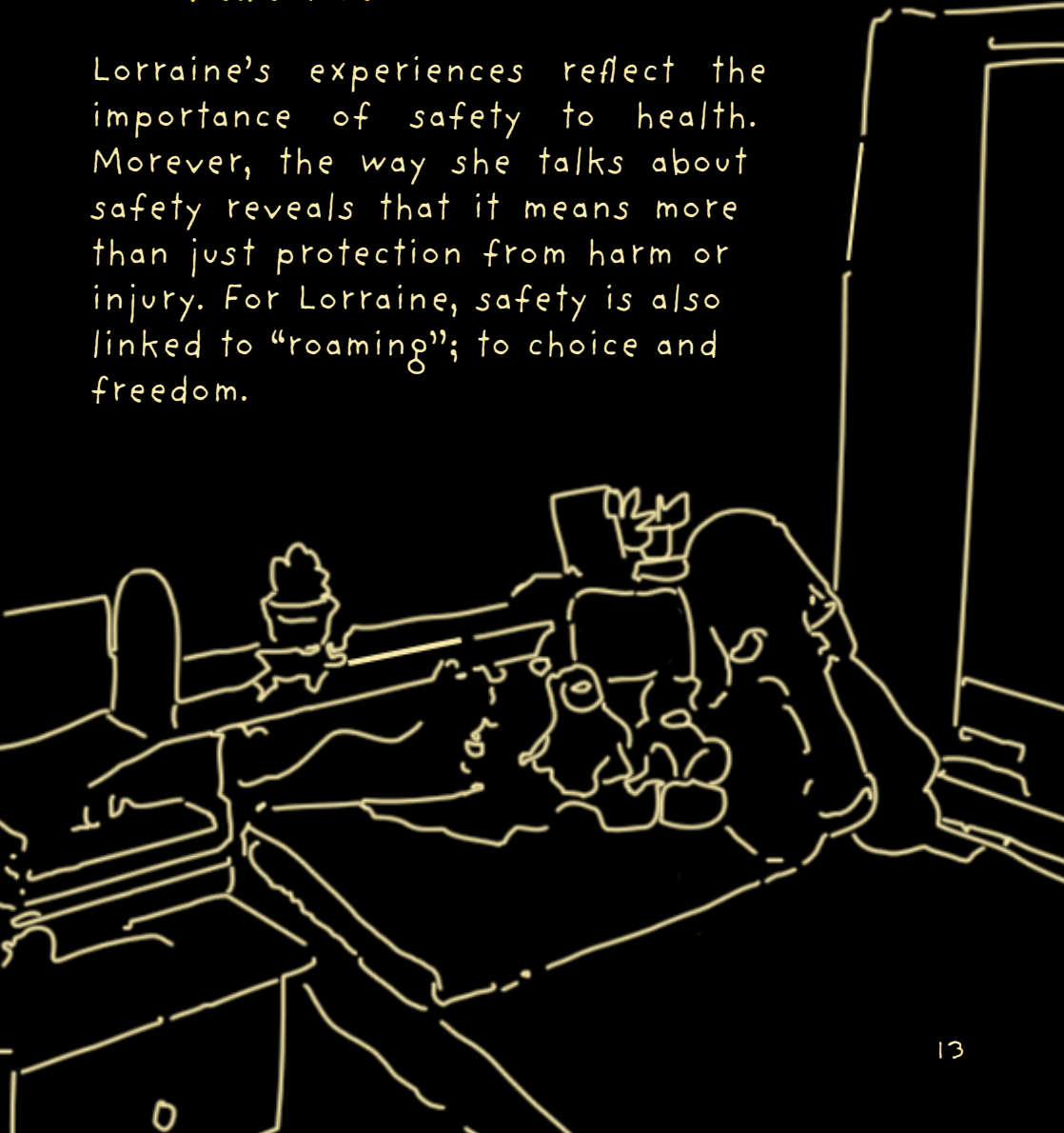
Lorraine's sense of goodness rests heavily on her sense of safety – the safety to create, explore, rest, and move about. She defines the good life as "a safe space that can be roamed without uncertainty or constant caution".

Growing up in Gascoyne Estate, it is easy to see how safety plays such a major role in shaping Lorraine's worldview. Like air – the absence of which is life-changing – a lack of safety has shaped much of how Lorraine experiences the world. Lorraine speaks of not feeling safe enough to walk alone around her neighbourhood. This impacts both her physical and mental wellbeing. Walks help her to reset emotionally

overwhelming moments in her life. Moreover, Lorraine explains:

**“As someone with a chronic health condition, walks are often my best mode of exercise as they are simple and effective”**

Lorraine’s experiences reflect the importance of safety to health. Moreover, the way she talks about safety reveals that it means more than just protection from harm or injury. For Lorraine, safety is also linked to “roaming”; to choice and freedom.



# ④ choice, freedom, poverty

“Living there was mainly about community. A lot of people that lived there went to the same school, so it was a bubble of familiar faces.”

- Isabelle

“Growing up there was very busy and lively, I’d play out all the time, I developed pretty close relationship with my neighbours. Now it’s a lot quieter because a lot of people have moved out and moved in.”

- Lorraine

Although Lorraine and the people she interviewed cherished Gascoyne Estate's strong sense of community, being able to stay and move felt like decisions outside their control. Lorraine and Isabelle describe growing up with close neighbours and familiar faces, but Lorraine also spoke of how the community has grown quieter with people moving out in recent years. Isabelle herself had recently moved away. For Lorraine, being able to choose where to move to feels like a luxury, since social housing options are limited and private housing costly.

When describing what a good life meant to her, Lorraine also defined it as "having choice". Ultimately, the inability to choose; to "live freely" and "roam", which comes with the limiting conditions of poverty, contributes to Lorraine's unsafe surroundings as well as the negative impacts on her health and well-being,

For Lorraine, poverty isn't just a lack of income, it is a poverty of choice, freedom, safety, health, well-being, and ultimately, a chance at a good life.

If you could speak  
to a policymaker  
now, what would  
you say?

“Think further, understand  
the nuances of prosperity  
and what that means to the  
people their actions impact.  
Spend more time on the  
ground so more effective  
decisions can be made to  
make life better for many”





## LORRAINE OWUSU

Lorraine is a resident and citizen social scientist from Gascoyne Estate, Hackney.

Lorraine recently finished her Sociology degree at the University of Leicester and currently works for a youth culture agency that has a mission to transform the lives of young people through culture, community and storytelling.

# PROSPERITY IN EAST LONDON 2021-2031

*Prosperity in east London 2021-2031* is a 10-year mixed-methods study tracing the effects of large-scale and long-term urban regeneration on local communities in east London. The study equips local residents with the tools to examine prosperity in their communities, producing citizen-centred insights on people's lived experiences of regeneration.

During wave 1 of the qualitative research, which took place between September and October 2021, 10 residents from 10 areas in east London, were employed and supported by east London community organisations: Compost CIC, Hackney Quest, and Leaders in the Community, to engage in 3-months of part-time research and training. Through UCL's Citizen Science Academy, they received practice-led training on research design, ethics, qualitative data collection, and social impact strategies. The teams carried out interviews and walking ethnographies exploring obstacles to prosperity in their different neighbourhoods, and are currently involved in presenting this research to policymakers.

Managed by the Institute for Global Prosperity's (IGP) Prosperity Co-lab-oratory UK (PROCOL UK) in partnership with the UCL Centre for Longitudinal Studies, the study was co-designed with members of the London Prosperity Board – a cross-sector partnership between the IGP, UCL East, London government, public agencies, businesses, the third sector, and local communities in east London, to change the way decision-makers think and act for prosperity.



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To read more about the Prosperity in east London 2021-2031 study, visit -  
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For more zines by our citizen scientists, please visit -  
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