



SOUTH LONDON **CARES**

Community Partner Referral Guide





SOUTH LONDON CARES

AN INTRODUCTION

South London Cares is a network of older and younger neighbours hanging out and helping one another in our rapidly changing city. We bring people together to enjoy connection and community in a disconnected age.

Our objectives are to tackle the growing plight of isolation and loneliness, not just amongst older people, but amongst younger Londoners too. We aim to help improve the connection, confidence, belonging, purpose and power of all participants so that older and younger neighbours alike can better navigate our rapidly changing world. Through this, we hope to bring people together to bridge social, generational, digital, cultural and attitudinal divides.

We do this because while our capital is one of the most amazing cities on earth – full of culture, business and people from all over the world – it can sometimes also feel anonymous, lonely and isolating. Globalisation, gentrification, digitisation, and rapid community change have made our city a place of extremes – one in which some of the best connected people live directly alongside some of the most isolated.

The result is that many older people have deep roots in their communities – from Brixton to Bermondsey, Camberwell to Clapham – but few connections, while many young neighbours can have hundreds of connections across the world but fewer roots in their communities.



"It changed my outlook. I thought youngsters all disliked older people and you've opened my eyes up. It's nice to chat with a friendly face or get a call from a younger person who's taken an interest in me...I'm a bit of a shy person, and he has helped me bring myself out of my shell. Everyone I've met through South London Cares has."

Tony, 74

AN INTRODUCTION

This disconnect wastes human potential, perpetuates social division, entrenches isolation and is ultimately corrosive for our society. In an ever-changing city like ours, these two groups, living side-by-side but seldom interacting, have so much to gain from one another in shared time, laughter, new experiences and friendship.

We enable younger and older neighbours to build relationships and share experiences in a variety of authentic ways, and make interaction on a personal level mutually accessible, sociable, enjoyable and fun.

As part of the wider 'Cares Family' of local charities that includes North London Cares, East London Cares, Manchester Cares and Liverpool Cares, South London Cares is built on a strong national model, infrastructure, experience and funding.

But South London Cares is also uniquely 'south London'. Our programmes centre on the inspiring past, present and future of our great neighbourhoods – and the history, diversity, and people that make this place so special. So from Peckham to West Norwood, the network helps older and younger people to feel part of their changing world, rather than left behind by it.





OUR COVID-19 RESPONSE

Due to the ongoing Covid-19 crisis, we have suspended all of our face-to-face activities. We have since developed the new and amended programmes detailed below to ensure neighbours still feel part of their community during these challenging times.

Social Clubs at Home

Our Social Clubs at Home are free group activities hosted via Zoom. All that's required to get involved is a smartphone or computer and a connection to the internet. Many of the clubs also have a dial-in option so neighbours without internet access can join the fun by calling in on their phone.

Much like our usual in-person Social Clubs, our virtual versions allow our community of older and younger neighbours to continue enjoying a wide variety of activities together. These include Desert Island Discs, Life Drawing, Sofa Singing, Quiz Club, Chair Yoga and Meditation, Local History workshops, South London Stories, All Cares Discos and many more!

Tech Support

If neighbours have a device and access to the internet but don't know how to use Zoom, we can provide one-to-one support with downloading and navigating the app. This allows neighbours to access our online social clubs and has the added benefit of enabling them to connect with their family, friends, and community more easily.

As well as assisting with Zoom set-up, we can also help neighbours to create email accounts and support them to become confident using them.

OUR COVID-19 RESPONSE

Friendship over the phone

We are supporting neighbours over the phone in a number of ways. Our one-to-one programme, Phone a Friend, matches an older neighbour with a younger neighbour for friendship and conversation through weekly calls. Members of our team also make regular calls, and we can refer people to our social clubs over the phone. If a neighbour is referred to us for this type of connection, we'll speak to them about the options available and together decide on what's most suitable for them.

Postal Activity Packs

Older neighbours can also sign up to receive our free monthly Postal Activity Pack, which includes an activity for every week of the month to do at home. Each suggestion is different and could range from writing a letter to an inanimate object, to deciding what you'd do if you were Prime Minister for the day, to cutting out words from a newspaper to turn into an abstract poem.

These **#AloneTogether** resources are also available for anyone to download for free from our website and are circulated in our regular emails. We're encouraging as many people as possible to take part and are frequently sharing examples from our #AloneTogether community on our social media channels.

Practical Support

Although we're unable to offer direct practical support ourselves, we signpost and refer neighbours to local and national partners who provide the support they need. This may be access to shopping deliveries, prescription collections, help at home, and more.

"We talk about everything. She is a lovely girl and we are getting to know each other really well. We look forward to chatting with each other - we have become friends!"

Yvonne, 80, matched with Megan, 25.





MAKING A REFERRAL

Our referral criteria

In order to be accepted onto our programmes, neighbours must fulfil the following criteria:

- Be aged 65 and over
- Live in Southwark or Lambeth
- Not have a dementia diagnosis
- Not have severe unmanaged mental health conditions

Unfortunately, our current model means we are unable to meet the needs of people living with dementia or unmanaged mental health conditions. If you are looking to support someone living with these conditions, please call us on 020 7118 0404 and we may be able to signpost you to some of our other community partners.

Our referral process

Anyone can refer to us by completing [this online form](https://southlondoncares.org.uk/older-neighbour-referral-form), including as much information about the older neighbour as possible. If you are unable to follow this link, visit <https://southlondoncares.org.uk/older-neighbour-referral-form>.

We will send you an email confirming that we have received your referral, and will then contact the neighbour to discuss our programmes and the support we can provide.

Please note, there is a waiting list for our friendship matching programme. If you require an idea of our current waiting times, then please contact us.

GETTING INVOLVED

As well as referring neighbours to our programmes, there are other ways for you to get involved in our work:

- **Invite** us to your team meetings or outreach events to talk about our programmes and answer any questions
- **Display** leaflets and posters
- **Add** South London Cares' information to any mail-outs that get sent to your network
- **Encourage** your teams to join our Community Partner mailing list
- **Share** information with us about your services and how to refer to you
- **Volunteer with us!** A number of our community partners share their knowledge and experience first hand by joining our programmes

Keeping us informed of your work

We believe in the power of community and the importance of working together, now more so than ever. We signpost and refer many people to local partners' activities and services, and proactively network with other local organisations.

Please do keep us informed of your activities, and if you think there is any potential for us to work together then please get in touch. Our contact details can be found on the last page. We would love to hear from you!



"If it wasn't for South London Cares I wouldn't be connected to so many people, activities and organisations - it's made me very happy."

Rita , 82

OUR ANTI-RACISM WORK

We are committed to tackling racism wherever it occurs in our organisation, supporting the end of systemic racism in our communities and wider society, and promoting inclusion across our network. This work impacts our programmes, our neighbours, and our partners in several ways:

Safety – it is vital that everyone feels safe on our programmes. We encourage people to inform us immediately if they cannot comfortably be themselves, do not feel included, or feel unsafe in any way.

Diversity and inclusion – our programmes need to represent the community in which we work with regard to race, religion, culture, class, gender, sexual orientation, and ability. On top of the work we are doing in this area, we encourage all of our network to provide feedback on how we could improve diversity and inclusion in our programmes.

Looking out for each other – we encourage everyone in our network to inform us immediately if they feel uncomfortable about how they, or one of their neighbours, has been treated.

Challenging unacceptable language and behaviour – unacceptable language or behaviour is either addressed at the time or discussed with those involved in due course, depending on the situation. Our aim is to learn and progress together through kindness, openness, and honesty.

The knowledge and experience of our community is critical to our success. The thoughts and reflections of everyone in our network shape what we do and how we do it, and we proactively survey and question those involved with our work in order to gain these insights. However, if you have something important to share then please don't wait for us to ask you, get in touch – we are always grateful for your feedback and we are committed to learning from it, and you.

More information about our anti-racism, diversity, and inclusion activities, both internal and external, can be found on the following link:

<https://southlondoncares.org.uk/anti-racism-action>

OUR DETAILS



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