



## **Winter Wellbeing Report 2014/15**

### **SOUTHWARK & LAMBETH**

April 2015

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## 1. Executive summary

South London Cares is a new community network mobilising young professionals to hang out with and help their older neighbours in Southwark and Lambeth in order to **combat isolation** and loneliness, **improve wellbeing**, connection, resilience and skills, and to **reduce division** across generational and social lines. Opened in August 2014, South London Cares is based on the success of our sister charity, North London Cares, which has been operational since 2011.

For the past four years North London Cares has run major Winter Wellbeing projects which, in that short time, have become a vital part of the community and public health landscape in Camden and Islington. Specifically, those winter projects have sought to help older neighbours (those over 65) to stay **warm, active, healthy and connected** during the most isolating time of the year, when the days are shorter, snow and ice can keep people indoors, and when visiting friends and relatives can become doubly challenging. Volunteers and core staff teams have knocked on thousands of doors, delivered free blankets and warm clothes, made referrals to local authority housing, seasonal health, benefits advice and mental health departments, and hosted dozens of Social Clubs to help older neighbours to stay **happy and fulfilled**.

This winter, South London Cares sought to replicate these innovative outreach and connection methods in Southwark and Lambeth. Although local authorities didn't directly commission this first project, we were able to work in close partnership with the 'Warm and Well in Winter' coalition (see page 10) to deliver a project that made a big difference to hundreds of neighbours.

Our Winter Wellbeing team delivered literature about how to stay warm in cold weather to 1,880 people. We had **1,007 face-to-face interactions** with older neighbours, offering a friendly, reassuring presence at a tough time. We **distributed £1,000 in small grants** to people struggling with high heating costs and rapidly changing circumstances. We **engaged 180 businesses** that often encounter isolation to raise awareness of our project, and 22 libraries distributed leaflets.

As a result of these outreach efforts, **147 neighbours over 65 received direct practical help** – and a total of 178 interventions were made. We gave **blankets to 43 people** who felt cold in their homes, and made a further 43 referrals to the Safe and Independent Living scheme, helping people to get support with benefits, home improvements, and other assistance provided by statutory and other community services. The value of these interactions and interventions at a difficult time of year is huge. Our sister charity, North London Cares, has shown that 62% of beneficiaries of Winter Wellbeing live alone; 49% consider themselves disabled; 96% of neighbours receiving support through the campaign said they benefitted from the help they received – and 91% felt more positive as a result of their interactions through the campaign.

As South London Cares deepens ties in Southwark and Lambeth over the coming years, we believe that Winter Wellbeing will become a vital part of the local public health landscape – connecting isolated neighbours who might normally fall through the gaps to local services and activities, preventing deeper isolation and emergency health interventions, and providing that all important glue that helps people feel **valued, vibrant and visible** in a rapidly changing world.

**ALEX SMITH**, Chief Executive

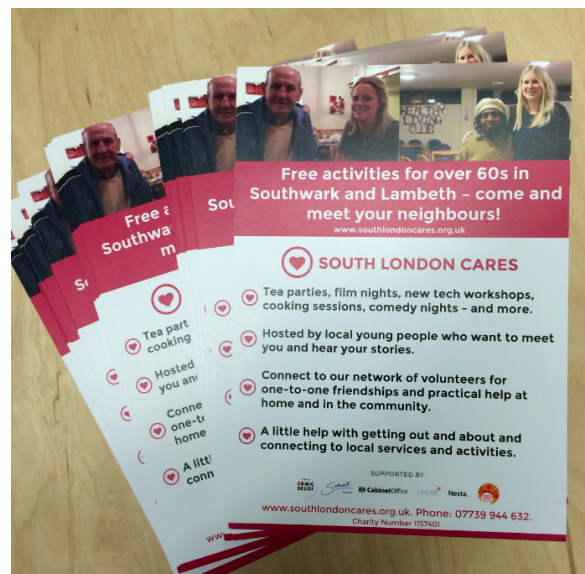
## 2. Introduction

Since winter 2011/2012, **South London Cares'** sister charity, North London Cares, has worked with local authorities and other community partners on its Winter Wellbeing (previously "Winter Warmth") project. The aim of the project is to ensure that older people in our target boroughs remain **warm, active, healthy and connected** during the winter months.

Councils, healthcare providers, and other agencies are, of course, already on high alert during the cold weather, and the "Cares family's" Winter Wellbeing project aims to complement and deepen their work by offering a **community outreach dimension** in a way that larger organisations are often not able to.

From a strategic public health perspective there are two ambitions. The first is to make contact with those who may be **housebound or isolated**, to ensure that people who might otherwise be unforthcoming in accessing mainstream public services do not fall through the gaps in statutory provision. The second ambition is to take a **preventative approach**, identifying concerns early on so that they do not become emergency cases.

The core of Winter Wellbeing is therefore based around **door-knocking** at local older people's homes, providing accessible **interactions and interventions** to potentially vulnerable neighbours through a combination of **conversations, activities, provisions and referrals**.



Winter Wellbeing began as a supplement to the Social Clubs and Love Your Neighbour (one-to-one) projects that make up the core of the "Cares family's" offer. Over time, however, the project has become more and more central to how the charities operate, now effectively existing as the **third plank of the community network's vision**, and fulfilling an essential community outreach role.

**South London Cares** was established in August 2014. As a young charity operating in unique conditions, it was an organisational priority to pilot the Winter Wellbeing project in Southwark and Lambeth, with the expectation that, in future, it can have a **similarly positive impact** on older neighbours suffering the isolating effects of winter in the southern inner-city boroughs too.

Naturally, the needs of the community, and existing provisions within the public, private and community sectors, are different in south London, and for this reason Winter Wellbeing was a project in development this year, as much about understanding the organisational topography of Southwark and Lambeth – where and why vulnerabilities exist, and how South London Cares can most **appropriately and collaboratively make a contribution** – as it was about hitting specific targets.

This report details the above work, setting out the aims, methods, outputs, outcomes, findings and evaluations we have delivered, and assessing what worked and what didn't, with the intention that the project can be **delivered on an even more ambitious scale** in future years.

### 3. Context

Southwark and Lambeth are two of the most recent London boroughs to experience the drastic change brought about by the **globalisation, digitisation, migration and gentrification** that have re-shaped so much of the capital city in recent years. Thanks to the rapid evolution of London's housing market, the Peckham made famous by *Only Fools and Horses* now has as a significant number of students and young professionals living and working there; likewise the Brixton featured in the songs of The Clash.

This social mix gives both boroughs an enormous amount of dynamism, but it also means that **social problems** and **public health inequalities** are at times magnified in ways they might not be elsewhere. This is particularly true for many of the older people with whom South London Cares works, who often grew up in traditional working-class south London communities – or else arrived in early waves of migration – and have witnessed a **great deal of change**. Many of the older neighbours South London Cares' volunteers spend time with – in sheltered housing units, community centres and other neighbourhood locations – are typical of this modern trend. A significant proportion feel a **real sense of isolation** from a world they believe is changing too fast, and too far beyond their control.

Meanwhile, changes in climate have led to older people feeling **anxious about unpredictable weather**<sup>1</sup>, and particularly about the isolating potential of very cold winters. 2012/13 – two winters ago – brought heavy snowfall and at least five bitterly cold snaps<sup>2</sup>, with snow and ice still on the ground in early April.

Such social, ecological and emotional conditions have the potential to create a **perfect storm for older people**: they can increase morbidity and mortality, deepen pre-existing medical conditions, and have a serious negative effect on mental health. They also make socialising or visiting relatives more difficult, impacting on wellbeing and adding to vulnerabilities.



South London Cares' aim is to deliver a **major community outreach project** through which, alongside our core Social Clubs and Love Your Neighbour projects, we can help overcome the generational and social divides described above, and to help support local public health priorities by **reinforcing the type of vital social bonds** which might otherwise be undermined.

Winter Wellbeing is a key part of this. The project aims to soften the challenges thrown up by the harshest part of the year, ensuring neighbours in Southwark and Lambeth do not feel left behind by the pace of change around them, are better able to access the services and activities provided by local authorities and other community organisations, and are able to remain **valued, vibrant and visible** through the winter months.

<sup>1</sup> See **North London Cares: Community Resilience Report 2013**: <http://northlondoncares.org.uk/blog/community-resilience-project-the-full-report/>

<sup>2</sup> See **North London Cares: Winter Wellbeing Report 2013/2014**: <http://northlondoncares.org.uk/blog/winter-warmth-2013-2014-the-full-camden-report/>

## 4. Project summary

South London Cares is still within its first full year as a charity, so this was the first time the Winter Warmth project – which has been running since 2011/12 in north London – was trialled in Southwark and Lambeth.

- In terms of delivery the project was a success, as the numbers to the right show, with high levels of face-to-face interaction across both boroughs;
- Because we were unable to obtain access to aggregated lists of addresses of neighbours over the age of 65 from our partner local authorities (due to sensitivities about data protection) we focused on **social events** attended by older people during the winter months, and neighbours in sheltered housing units, particularly those in which South London Cares is already hosting Social Clubs;
- We had more interactions with older neighbours in Lambeth, but actually made more “interventions” (referrals, blanket deliveries, distribution of grants, etc) in Southwark – largely because the balance there was tilted more in favour of sheltered housing units, which yielded greater results because these are locations of high isolation and need;
- There was a clear **need and appetite** for the services South London Cares provides, evidenced by the high numbers of referrals from and into Social Clubs;
- The main challenge we faced in delivering the Winter Wellbeing project was the lack of lists of neighbours over the age of 65 from the Councils. This meant that, while the project was largely a success delivery-wise, we did not feel that our resources were always focused on the people that we could potentially help most.

### Delivery in numbers

- Delivered leaflets and literature about how to stay warm in cold weather to **1,880 people**
- **1,007** face-to-face interactions with older neighbours
- **£1,000** distributed in fuel grants to people struggling with high heating costs and rapidly changing circumstances
- **180** businesses engaged about the project
- **22** libraries distributed leaflets
- **147** people received further help, with a total of **178** individual interventions
- **43** blankets were delivered to people who felt cold in their homes
- **43** referrals were made to SAIL – the safe and independent living service administered by Age UK which supports older people to navigate local services and activities
- **29** community events attended



## 5. Aims

### 5.1 Outreach

Although, as Section 3 explains, South London Cares' Winter Wellbeing project required a radically different approach from its north London equivalent, the core goals with regards to outreach were similar to the ways in which our sister charity has operated since 2011 – namely to identify people who were feeling isolated or struggling with the cold, and to deliver a **combination of interactions and interventions** that provide **emotional and practical support holistically**.

Knowing that the project would present challenges, we set relatively **modest but achievable goals**. The project's aim was to knock on 500-1,000 doors in each of Lambeth and Southwark. Sharing literature with the community partnership's 'Warm and Well in Winter' project, coordinated by the Southwark and Lambeth public health team, we set out to give all the older people we identified – whether we spoke to them face-to-face or not – the following literature: a) a South London Cares Winter Wellbeing leaflet with information on the **breadth of services and activities** available and a contact number, b) a Council-produced 'Warm and Well' brochure about staying safe and healthy in winter, c) an Age UK thermometer d) an Age UK recipe book.



For those we spoke to who were in need of help on some level we aimed to make a range of different interventions, including:

- Delivery of **blankets and warm clothes** when people were struggling with the cold – and in some cases hot food;
- Provision of **small grants** of £100 in each borough, for people struggling with **fuel poverty** and **rapidly changing social circumstances** such as bereavements;
- Signposting to South London Cares' **Social Clubs** and **Love Your Neighbour** programme, and making social referrals to SLC staff running those projects where appropriate;
- Referrals to SAIL – the Southwark (and now Lambeth) Safe and Independent Living service for people in need of:
  - Urgent resolution of **broken boilers** and other heating issues;
  - An “energy doctor” to help **insulate** their homes;

- **Financial advice** on cold weather and other **benefits** discounts;
- Other domestic support – for example home improvement and repair work.
- Other referrals, where necessary, aiming to address more serious issues such as **mental health** problems, **physical health** and **occupational therapy** needs, **housing** issues, and **social care** provisions.

## 5.2 Community partners

Although the door-knocking element has historically (through North London Cares), been the central plank of the Winter Wellbeing project, it is also vital to create a climate where the support South London Cares, local partners and local authorities provide is located within a wider community context. Older people who feel left behind can be suspicious of new things and may therefore be unlikely to take up **services they haven't come across before**, so obtaining the endorsement of trusted community partners was essential.



As a result, South London Cares' branding and reach were important. An isolated older person is significantly more likely to respond to a leaflet through their front door, for example, if they have seen the leaflet somewhere before, so we wanted to 'layer' the message and build on the profile South London Cares has established over the previous few months.

We also wanted to obtain the genuine buy-in of locally known people, many of whom have had trusting relationships with local older people in the community for many years. The ideal was that these local community partners were familiar with South London Cares and felt comfortable **signposting or even referring** customers and patients to the charity.

To this end we aimed to take a number of steps:

- Promoting the project amongst businesses across each of the areas where we worked, focusing especially on **cafes, pubs, betting shops, food shops**, laundrettes and other small businesses frequented by older people;
- **Speaking to GPs** to encourage them to make **social referrals** to South London Cares and to generally publicise the charity's work;
- Engaging with **libraries, community centres**, and other third sector partners to encourage them to publicise the project;
- Using South London Cares' own Social Clubs as a vehicle through which to raise the issue of Winter Wellbeing, providing information and **identifying vulnerabilities** where they existed among regular attendees.



## 5.3 Internal goals

As Section 3 of this report explains, the structure and processes already in place in Southwark and Lambeth to deal with cold weather were different to what we had encountered previously through North London Cares. In fact, the strong infrastructure of the previously established 'Warm and Well in Winter' project, a collaboration between Southwark and Lambeth Councils, Age UK Lambeth, Age UK Southwark and Lewisham, King's College Hospital, Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust and The Red Cross was already in place when South London Cares opened in August, 2014.

South London Cares aimed to add value to this existing work with a specific outreach project, which identified isolation in the community anew, through our combination of door knocking, working with local businesses, and speaking at social events at sheltered housing units and in other community projects. These elements had not previously been trialled by the existing 'Warm and Well in Winter' coalition, and we were grateful that the existing partners were so enthusiastic about our joining the partnership.

***"My heating bills are so expensive and this will really help me get through to spring. Thank you, it means a lot."***



# THIS WINTER, STAY

## WARM ACTIVE HEALTHY & CONNECTED

**All through the cold snap, local volunteers can:**

- Deliver blankets, coats, jumpers or socks to your door.
- Connect you to teams at the Council who will help keep your home warm and safe, provide benefits advice, and help reduce bills.
- For people in difficult circumstances, arrange small grants of up to £100 to help you meet the rising cost of fuel.
- Help you to get the weekly shopping or make an important GP appointment.
- Come around for a chat, some company and a cup of tea.
- Welcome you to a wide range of local social clubs - like tea dances and film nights.

**Stay healthy:**

- \* If you have symptoms not normal for you, go to your doctor - it could save your life.
- \* It's important to get a flu jab every year. Contact your GP or a local pharmacy to book a vaccination.
- \* For support to stop smoking or for addiction or weight loss advice, call the number below.

CALL **07921 439 479**  
OR VISIT **SOUTHLONDONCARES.ORG.UK**



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## 6. Operational (methodology)

Due to a short lead-in period, the relative youth of the charity, and a lower profile within our target communities in Southwark and Lambeth and, in particular, because of the lack of access to aggregated address lists for over-65s, it quickly became clear that South London Cares' first Winter Wellbeing project would be different from the North London Cares forbears on which it was based.

In particular, rather than acting as a clearing house for referrals ourselves, and fielding neighbours to their most relevant local services or activities, we worked closely with the other partners of the 'Warm and Well in Winter' project to refer neighbours to the Southwark (and latterly Lambeth) Safe and Independent Living (SAIL) scheme, a paper-based referral system which serves as a portal to community and health activities provided for older people by various not-for-profit groups within our target boroughs.

***“Meeting you  
all is giving  
me a new  
lease of life.  
The  
weekends  
are a  
lonesome  
time for me. I  
go up and  
down. When  
I’m with you  
all, I go up.”***

The 'Warm and Well in Winter' partnership was highly proactive in attending and setting up community events in Southwark and Lambeth – and South London Cares was invited to contribute to and augment these activities throughout the winter. This, along with the lack of aggregated address lists for over-65s, meant that events played a far bigger role than at North London Cares, comprising about half of the outreach element of the project. The other half was comprised of door-knocking visits, particularly in sheltered housing units.

A small amount of engagement was carried out through untargeted door-knocking, mainly on the large estates across our target boroughs and on which the local authorities had recommended we reach out. We undertook this activity in the hope that, despite reaching fewer older people proportionally, those we did speak to would be in greater need (as compared to those living in sheltered housing units). However, this approach bore little fruit because the proportion of older people home and willing to answer their doors was low, and it quickly became clear that it was not a viable approach. This is something, which we will hope to correct through future Winter Wellbeing projects.



## 6.1 Approach

Both the partner social events we spoke at, and the sheltered housing units at which we run South London Cares Social Clubs, required us to be at a certain place at a certain time in a way that conventional door-knocking did not. With the sheltered housing there was usually a building manager who we needed to meet initially in order to present identification and explain the purpose of the project. These managers often oversaw several units, so times and dates for visits needed to be arranged in advance.

This introduced a significant element of diary management and administration to the project – especially as SAIL forms needed to be dispatched and interventions made at the same time – and meant the project had a large number of geographical and logistical ‘moving parts’. Forward planning and good division of labour was essential to getting the project right. To achieve this efficiency, we mapped the events and the sheltered housing units to which we were invited to speak about the Winter Wellbeing project beforehand. We allocated clear roles within the team, and created an internal referral pathway for deeper interventions.

***"London goes at 1,000 mph. You all could be out with your friends, and you choose to spend time with us. It's like a hidden jewel."***





In addition, we took the following approach to deliver the intended outputs for the project:

- **Outreach**

- We spoke to groups at almost all the community events we were invited to, working in geographical patches and visiting nearby sheltered housing units to ensure we were as time-efficient as possible;
- The breakdown of activity was roughly evenly split between speaking at partners' group events and door-knocking and speaking at SLC's own clubs in sheltered housing units – at times these overlapped, with many of the events being things like coffee mornings within sheltered housing;
- The events varied hugely in size and scale – from a small meeting with older people with learning difficulties through to a day's leafleting and holding conversations with older people in the entry foyer at ASDA on Old Kent Road;
- We initially piloted “generic” door-knocking as well – that is, knocking on doors on Council estates recommended to us by the local authorities for having a high population of older neighbours – but this proved inefficient and unsuccessful, and only a handful of our interactions with older neighbours resulted from this approach;
- Each week we assigned one member of staff to back-of-house roles and referral-processing, so as to keep on top of the growing list of interventions and logistical challenges, such as delivering blankets and jumpers, which the project raised;
- Our central coordinator liaised with the ‘Warm and Well in Winter’ project coordinator and arranged a calendar of events, sheltered housing visits, and blanket deliveries for each day, which the other members of the team carried out on the ground;
- We were careful to liaise early with partners about the delivery of leaflets and other resources, so that lack of literature did not become a barrier to meeting our goals;



- Members of the team door-knocked sheltered housing units and spoke at local social events between Monday-Friday most weeks, between 10am and nightfall;
  - We collaborated with Age UK and other partners: at the events where they were present we focused on South London Cares' social "offer" (the Love Your Neighbour one-to-one scheme and Social Clubs project) whereas when they were not we gave information about direct and practical "winter" issues like heating or financial support as well.
- **Community partners**
    - We spoke to a number of businesses in each borough, focusing on those near the sheltered housing where we were working (predominantly in Peckham and Streatham), so as to create a "community consensus" around Winter Wellbeing;
    - The main feedback from our sister charity North London Cares regarding businesses was that many were hard to engage with and less willing to help than they first seemed – so we took a scale rather than a substitution approach, in the hope that a small proportion of a large number would promote the project (rather than relying on a targeted few);
    - We called a number of GP surgeries from both boroughs, asking them to promote the many services, activities and offers available to older people through the Winter Wellbeing project and South London Cares' other core project work;
    - We built on existing relationships with community centres to publicise the project through the events we spoke at – enabling us to reach a number of older people at once;
    - We used libraries' internal circulation mechanisms to distribute the leaflets to those people we did not visit in person;
    - We used South London Cares' own Social Clubs – as well as other over-65s events – as a platform for speaking to older people.





## 6.2 Challenges

The very broad challenges set out above – to do with the lack of targeted address lists and the overall effect this had on the project – were a big impediment, as we explain in Sections 8 and 9. As well as these there were a number of smaller challenges.

Getting GPs to seriously engage with this preventative community approach was difficult and a lot of time was consumed leaving messages and chasing up practice managers. As with businesses, we tried to mitigate against this by increasing the scale of our GP outreach, so as to “cast a wider net”. The effect of this was limited, though, and we ultimately decided that while the weather was cold we needed to prioritise door-knocking – which allowed us to make an immediate, tangible difference.

In line with our sister charity North London Cares’ 3-Year Impact Evaluation, conducted and published in 2014<sup>3</sup> (which suggests there is scope for mobilising young professionals more effectively in the Winter Wellbeing project), we had hoped to involve South London Cares volunteers in the project. However, the nature of the outreach work meant that statutory considerations were necessarily greater; having volunteers without formal ID or DBS checks visiting sheltered housing was not an option, and the events component was similarly difficult to involve volunteers with. In future South London Cares Winter Wellbeing projects we need to think about how best to mobilise the charity’s growing volunteer base – for example through corporate community door-knocking or business outreach days.

Recommendations for improving and fine-tuning the Winter Wellbeing project are detailed in Section 9. Meanwhile immediately below is a table setting out the smaller challenges we faced and what we did to overcome them.

| Challenge                                              | Why?                                                                                                                                              | Solution                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|--------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Reaching the most isolated residents</b>            | Many of the most vulnerable residents were unwilling to open their doors.                                                                         | We were sure to carry council- and South London Cares-branded ID cards, and in the cases where people were unwilling to come to the door we spoke to them over intercoms, and posted leaflets or handwritten notes. However, it should be noted that there were probably a very small number of the most isolated whom we were still unable to reach.                       |
| <b>Slow blanket deliveries</b>                         | Our blanket supplier took ten days to deliver to our head office – and then often we would need another 2 days to deliver blankets to neighbours. | We switched blanket suppliers but the problem persisted – and an additional problem was caused by older people becoming envious of those with different blankets. In future years it will be important to pre-order a large enough number to last the duration of the project, so as to avoid backlogs.                                                                     |
| <b>Engaging those who did not speak fluent English</b> | Southwark and Lambeth are exceptionally diverse and many neighbours do not speak English.                                                         | In some instances – with Spanish neighbours, for example – we had the language skills within South London Cares’ pool of staff to cross the communication barrier. With others, younger relatives were often available to act as interpreters. Where the language barrier could not be crossed we made a note and these are recorded in the data (see Sections 6, 7 and 8). |

<sup>3</sup> See **North London Cares: Impact Evaluation**: <http://northlondoncares.org.uk/blog/the-difference-you-make-nlcs-impact-evaluation-2011-2014/>

## 6.3 Timeline

Below is a timeline of how we divided up the work streams for the project.

|                          | Nov '14 |  | Dec '14 |  | Jan '15 |  | Feb '15 |  | Mar '15 |  |
|--------------------------|---------|--|---------|--|---------|--|---------|--|---------|--|
| Planning                 |         |  |         |  |         |  |         |  |         |  |
| Sheltered housing        |         |  |         |  |         |  |         |  |         |  |
| Events                   |         |  |         |  |         |  |         |  |         |  |
| Engaging with businesses |         |  |         |  |         |  |         |  |         |  |
| Speaking to GPs          |         |  |         |  |         |  |         |  |         |  |
| Evaluation and report    |         |  |         |  |         |  |         |  |         |  |

## 7. Delivery summary

This section provides the delivery breakdown for the project as whole, across both boroughs.

### 7.1 Engagement by area

The table below shows the geographical distribution of the sheltered housing units and social events we spoke at. As it shows, we actually spoke to more of both in Lambeth than in Southwark – although it's worth noting that the sheltered housing units in Southwark were on average larger.

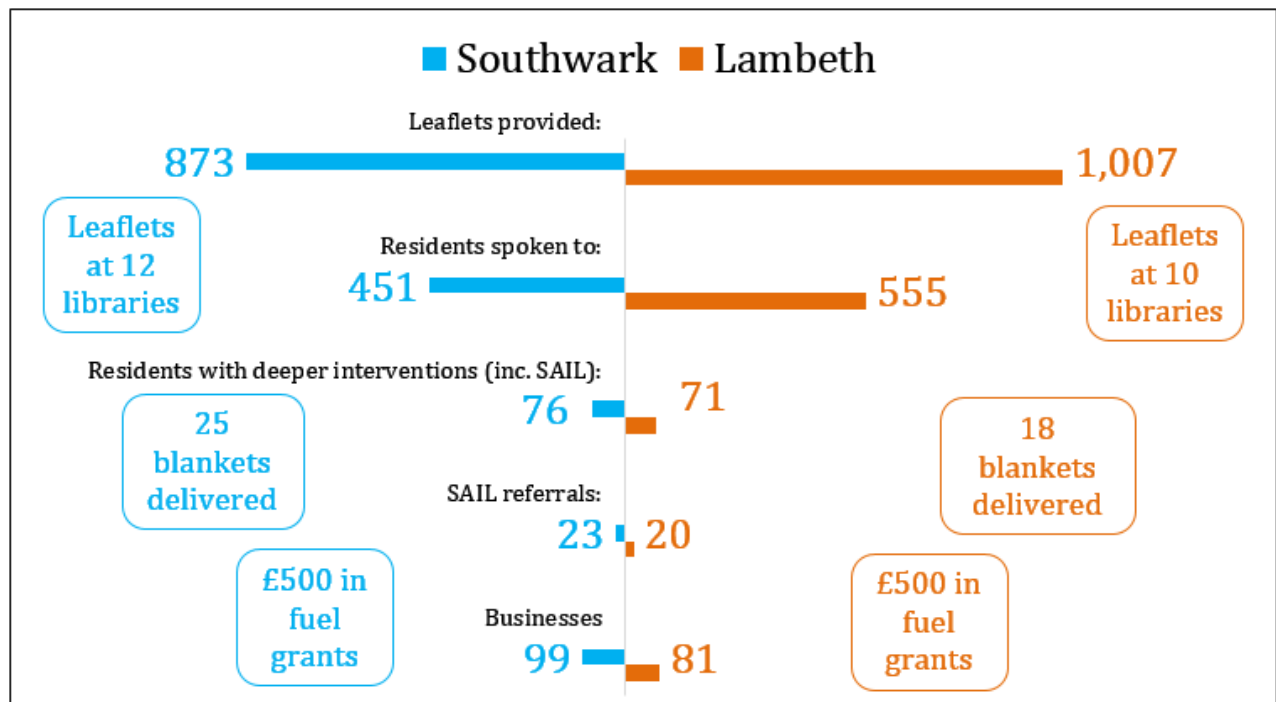
We were very much led, in deciding where to go, by where events were being held and where sheltered housing units were based. This meant that Streatham and Peckham – which are among the poorest areas of the respective boroughs – received the most attention.

| Borough   | Area                                     | Sheltered housing units | Social events |
|-----------|------------------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------|
| Lambeth   | Streatham & Tooting                      | 5                       | 5             |
|           | Brixton & Coldharbour Lane               | 2                       | 2             |
|           | Vauxhall & Kennington                    | 2                       | 3             |
|           | Stockwell & Clapham                      | 4                       | 2             |
|           | Norwood & Tulse Hill                     | 1                       | 3             |
|           | Dulwich & Gypsy Hill                     | 2                       | 2             |
|           | <b>Total</b>                             | <b>16</b>               | <b>17</b>     |
| Southwark | Peckham & Camberwell                     | 5                       | 2             |
|           | Elephant and Castle & Walworth           | 3                       | 2             |
|           | Surrey Quays, Old Kent Road & Bermondsey | 2                       | 3             |
|           | Borough & London Bridge                  | 1                       | 2             |
|           | <b>Total</b>                             | <b>11</b>               | <b>10</b>     |

***"It brightened up my day when you came to visit me. Thank you."***

## 7.2 Overall delivery outcomes

Below is the core delivery data for each of the two boroughs:



In total, across both boroughs, we delivered **1,880 leaflets** and had direct **conversations with 1,007 older neighbours**, through a combination of visits to sheltered housing units, visits to community events, and a small amount of untargeted door-knocking.

A total of **178 deeper interventions** were made, across **147 people**. We distributed **£1,000 in 10 small grants** to those who needed help the most, and particularly who were struggling with anxiety connected to extortionately high fuel bills and other rapidly changing circumstances.

We delivered **43 blankets**, made **43 referrals to the SAIL scheme** (run by Lambeth and Southwark Age UK teams) and gave information to 180 businesses to help them to reach out on our behalf. All of this is broken down in more detail in Sections 8 and 9.

## 7.3 How engagement took place

Whereas with the Winter Wellbeing project at North London Cares door-knocking makes up the chief component of the outputs, the lack of aggregated council lists of older people's addresses in south London meant that we had to work much harder to identify and reach older neighbours. We ultimately did this through a combination of three approaches:

1. **Visits to social events** – ranging from South London Cares' own Social Clubs to events taking place within the 'Warm and Well in Winter' project, to other miscellaneous gatherings at community centres and event supermarkets);
2. **Visits to sheltered housing units** – requiring the permission and physical presence of managers;
3. **Untargeted door-knocking on council housing estates in areas with high deprivation and recommended to us by the local authorities** (which we gave up on relatively quickly due to a low return on investment).

Chart 1, below, shows the proportion that each of these three components made up in each of the boroughs. As it shows, a higher proportion of interactions came at local social events in Lambeth than in Southwark.

This was partly to do with the piecemeal nature of the project, which required us to present on the services on offer through Winter Wellbeing at the various events we heard about or were invited to – rather than taking a more scientific approach.

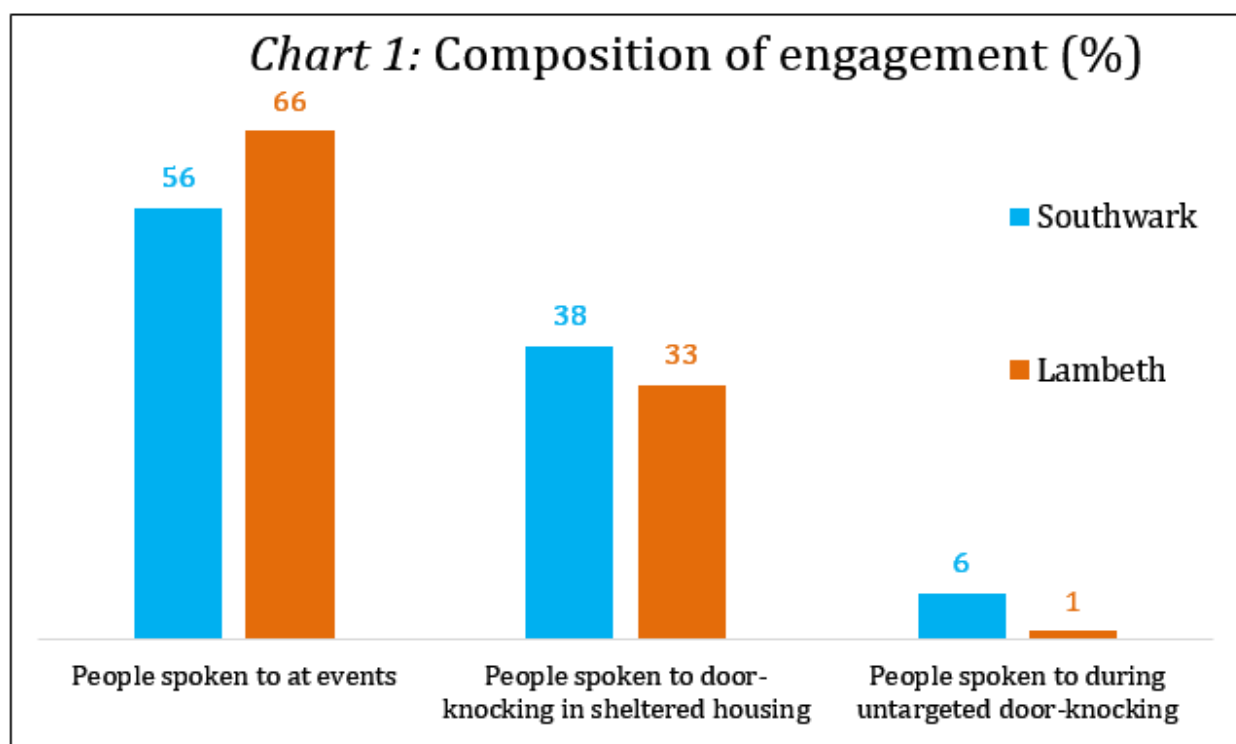
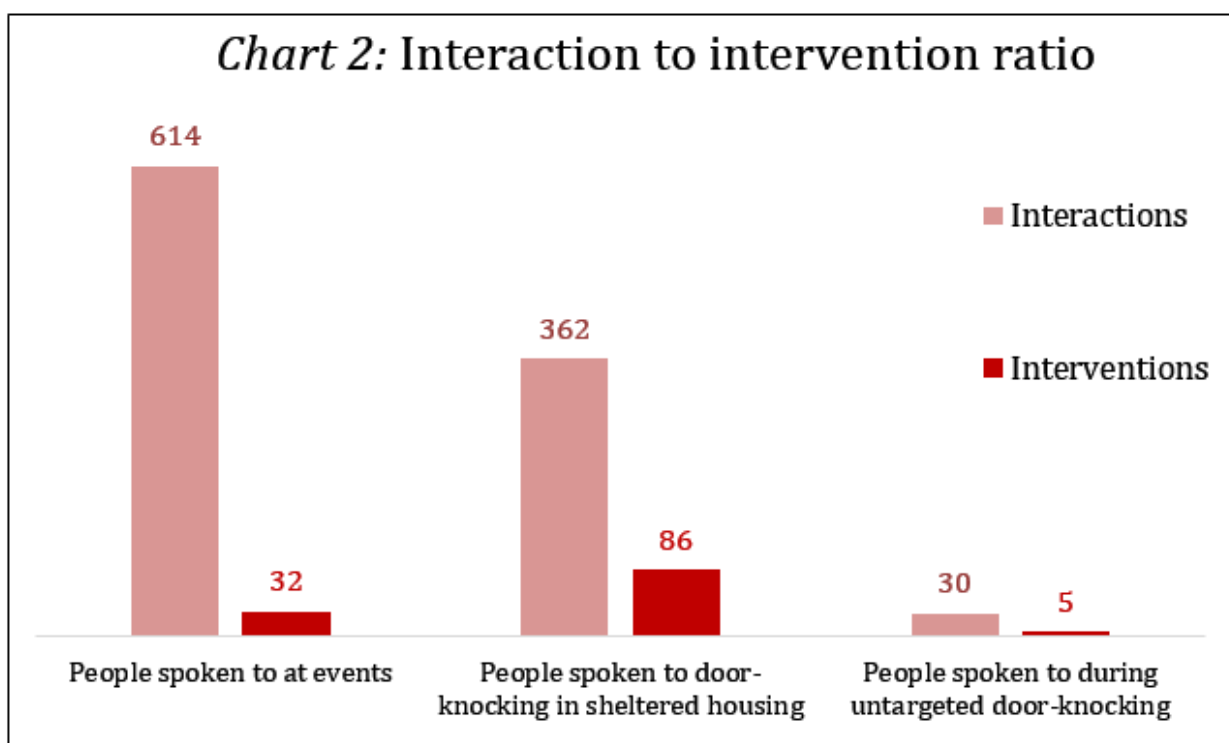


Chart 2 (below) meanwhile, reflects the fact that visits to sheltered housing units were significantly more likely to result in further interventions than visits to social events – with 24% of interactions at SLC Social Clubs resulting in interventions, compared to just 5% of those at other community events such as our outreach days at supermarkets. This is partly explained in that presentations at events often gave less one-on-one time with neighbours, aside from a short window immediately afterwards. There was effectively less interaction than there tends to be on doorsteps, or through SLC Social Clubs, which, built up over time, provide a genuine network of trust between friends. It is also a result of the fact that community events are often attended by those who are, by definition, slightly less in need of help.



The disparity between events and sheltered housing is significant, and helps explain why, despite reaching fewer people in Southwark, we actually made more interventions there – because during the winter months we hosted more social clubs in Southwark (where we have more direct funding to do so).

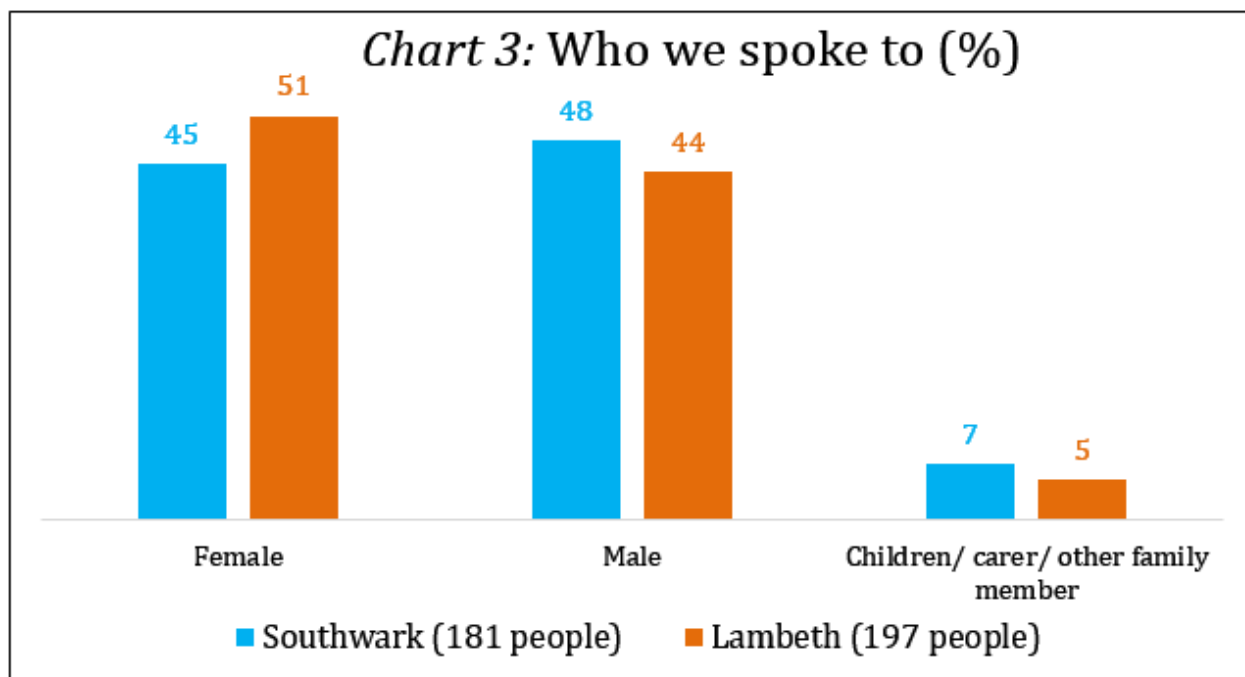




## 7.4 Who we spoke to

Chart 3, below, shows the gender breakdown of the people to whom we spoke specifically through our door-knocking efforts in sheltered housing units and through our untargeted outreach on estates (including a very small number who refused to engage or spoke no English).

**NB:** this does not include community engagement events such as supermarket activities, or SLC's own Social Clubs, where recording demographic information was difficult due to short conversations with many people at once.



When door-knocking on estates, at about one in twenty doors we did not speak to an older person at all, but instead to a younger relative or a carer. Although these interactions did not enable us to have direct contact with an older person, we felt they were still of value and worth including as interactions like any other. Frequently they led to deeper interventions (referrals, additional visits, blankets, etc), and even when they did not, they served an important purpose in raising awareness of the Winter Wellbeing project, flagging issues, and above all helping carers and relatives to feel supported by the council and the community.

The very striking figure about our findings, though, is that they do not reflect the gender balance one might expect (usually a 3:2 ratio between women and men). Indeed, in Southwark we actually spoke to marginally more men. This bucks the national trend of women living longer and therefore outnumbering older men, but it is hard to say exactly why. It may be to do with the composition of those in sheltered housing as compared to the wider population.



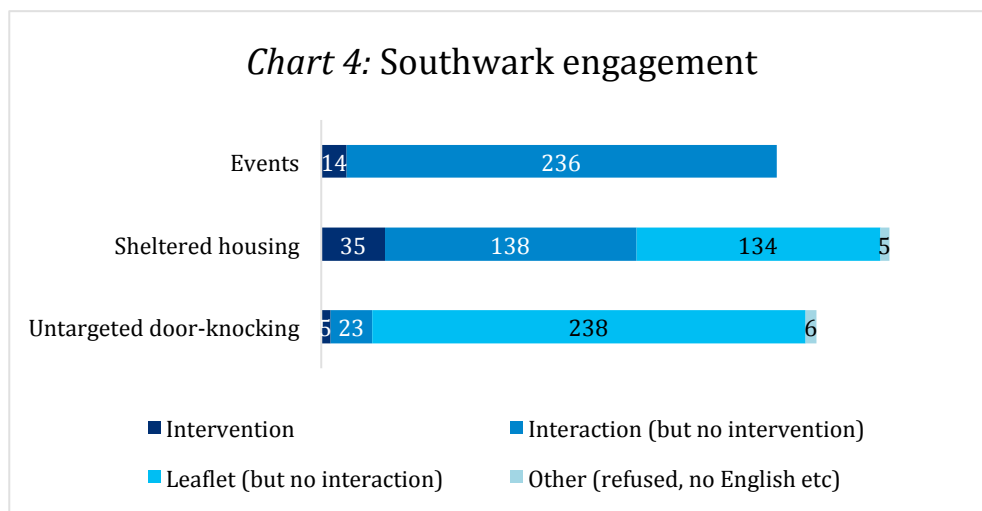
***"Feeling lonely makes you feel blank...having someone to talk to fills in the blanks!"***

## 8. Southwark

On an operational level our project in Southwark was reasonably successful. Visits to local community events, while less effective as a means of making interventions, were useful as a means of outreach, and as a way of raising awareness of South London Cares' work. There were fewer interactions in Southwark than in Lambeth, but conversely there were actually more interventions. Door knocking was sporadic in identifying older people because of the lack of address lists from the council – and yet we were able to make **76 deeper interventions in Southwark** for people who felt they needed help.

### 8.1 Southwark outreach

The chart below shows the basic outline of the engagement in Southwark. Note that many of the 238 leaflets given out in untargeted door-knocking may have been to younger people as we were unable to know who was living there before knocking on the door.



We attended 10 community engagement events hosted by partners in Southwark, reaching 250 people. This figure is slightly inflated by one very prolific day at a stall in ASDA, where we spoke to nearly 100 older neighbours. If we take this out of the equation then we find that Southwark was significantly less successful in terms of engagement at events specifically than Lambeth.

In total, we spoke to **173 older people living in sheltered housing**, across 11 units. Of these we provided further support to 35. And we spoke to **28 older people during our untargeted door-knocking**, of whom 5 needed extra help. We put leaflets through a further 372 letterboxes, although it's worth noting that many of these will not have reached older people, as they were at untargeted addresses.

#### Case Study 1: Grace

We came across Grace at the Yalding Centre in the north east of the borough, on Southwark Park Road. She was struggling with the cold in her house, and said part of the reason she came to the centre was to stay warm.

We provided Grace with a blanket, and filled out a SAIL form for her, so that she could get some help from Southwark Council with insulation.

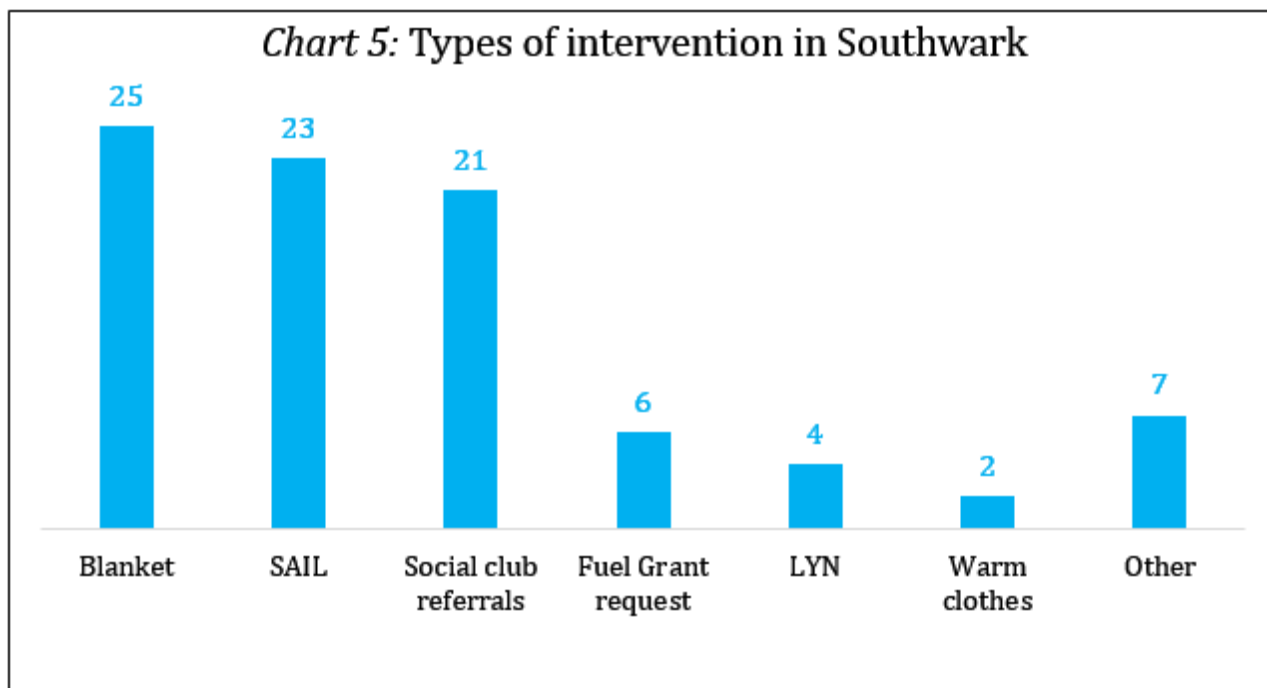
Grace said this made her feel that there were "people looking out for her."

Note that although the above chart shows only 54 interventions, a further 22 came as a result of people calling up having received leaflets (or, more commonly, as a result of the warden on the estate calling on their behalf). So in total we made **interventions in 76 cases**.

## 8.2 Southwark interventions

We therefore made interventions in the cases of 76 older people in Southwark – with 88 individual interventions, as a result of some people receiving more than one.

In the vast majority of cases council referrals were made through SAIL, a process which worked well, although due to the pressures of winter and high uptake responses sometimes took a few weeks. 6 people requested fuel grants – and **grants were distributed to 5**. These grants are intended to help people in the deepest need, particularly those who have pre-existing health conditions, who spend highly on fuel bills, who do not have many close friends or family members around, and whose circumstances may have altered drastically during the winter, for example by a bereavement or unexpectedly high bills.



We also **delivered 25 blankets in Southwark** and made a combined **25 referrals to South London Cares' core services** (Social Clubs and Love Your Neighbour).

### 8.3 Businesses and GPs in Southwark

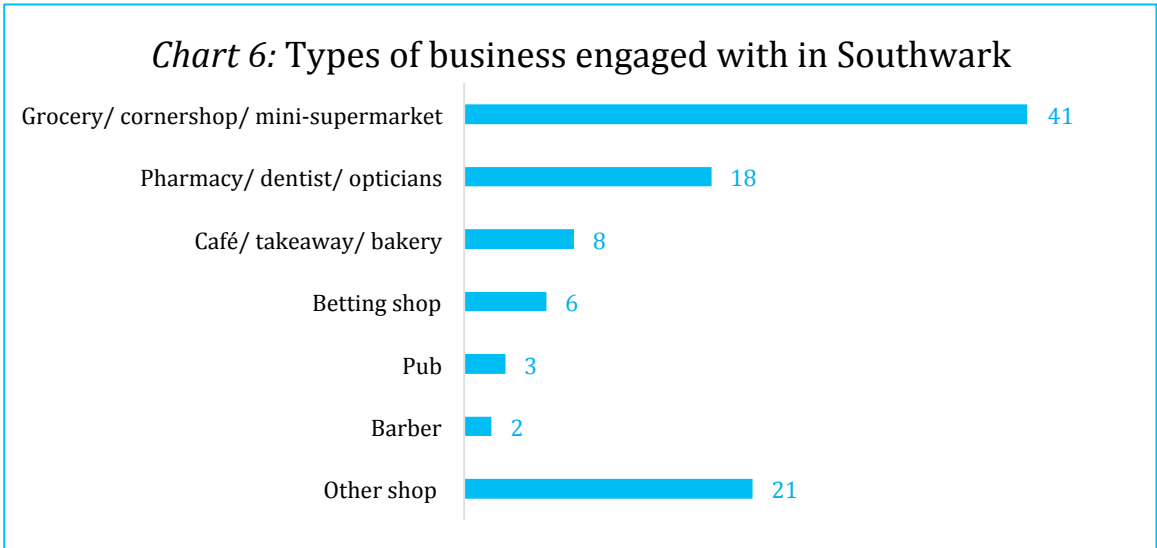
#### Businesses

In engaging local businesses to promote the campaign amongst their older customers, we focused on the big roads running through the borough, and on the small rows of shops, pubs and cafes immediately adjacent to the sheltered housing units we were working in. Most of the businesses we spoke to were in Peckham, to reflect the fact that many of the events we presented at, and many of the sheltered housing units we door-knocked in, were in this area. In order to better reach our target demographic, we chose the businesses at our own discretion, focusing on those that were affordable and had a local or independent feel.

We set aside time specifically for targeting businesses. About a third of those we reached out to allowed us to leave stacks of leaflets, and with the other two thirds we were permitted to tack posters into the window. As Chart 6, below, shows, more than half were convenience or food shops of some kind, including some mini-supermarkets such as Tesco's. The 'Other' category includes pet shops, household, hardware, charity shops and Pawnbrokers, among others.

There was a particularly high number of pharmacists, which is encouraging, as pharmacists tend to be the first point of contact for many people with health concerns.

General responses to the campaign were positive, without exception. However, reflecting the experience of our sister charity North London Cares the fall-off rate amongst businesses was high, and many did not put the leaflets up after initial enthusiasm, or even took them down once we had left. Our much higher overall number of businesses targeted hopefully mitigated some of this drop-off.



#### GPs

GPs were very difficult to make contact with, and we were careful not to let the time-consuming process of calling them de-rail the other components of the project. Ultimately we had very little success engaging GPs to make referrals, and only delivered leaflets for distribution to patients to four medical centres.

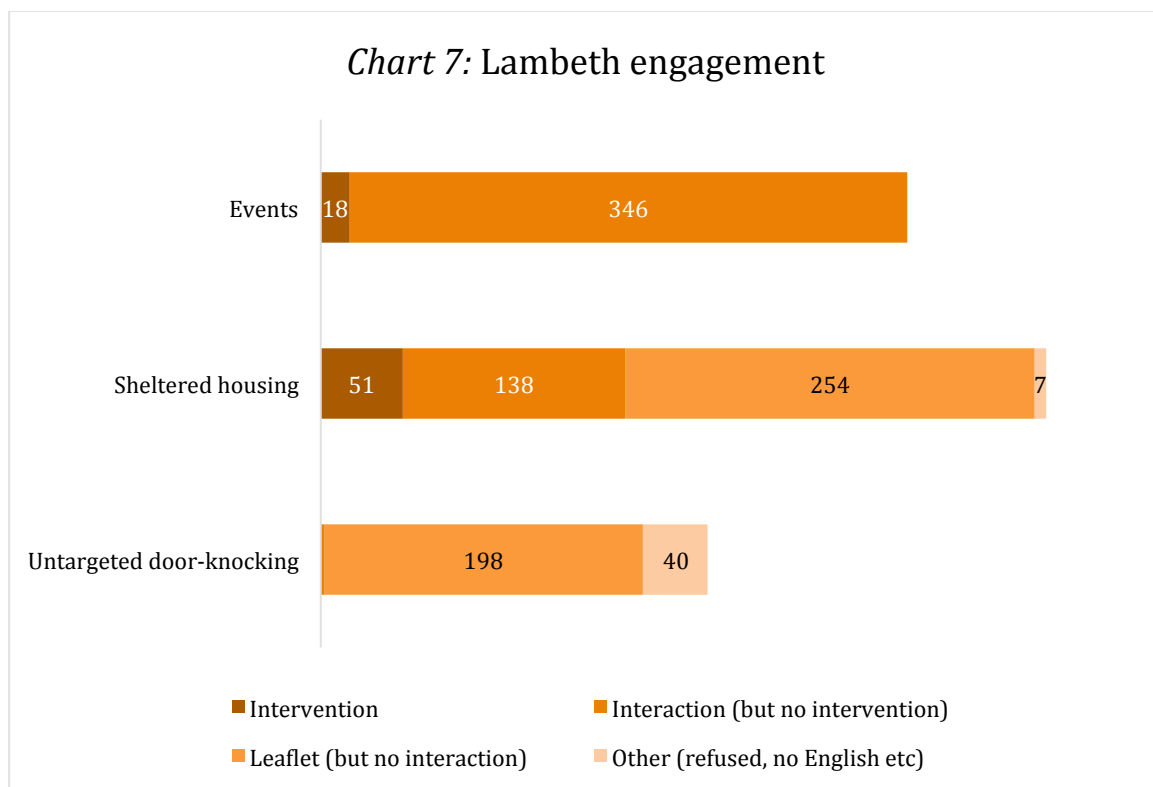
## 9. Lambeth

On an operational level our project in Lambeth was reasonably successful. The visits to community events, while less effective as a means of identifying people who required deeper interventions, were useful as a means of outreach and as a way of raising awareness of South London Cares' work. There were more interactions in Lambeth than in Southwark, but there were actually fewer interventions – possibly because a higher proportion of the Lambeth interactions took place at public events that yield shorter interactions and therefore less likelihood of intervention.



### 9.1 Lambeth outreach

The chart below shows the basic outline of the engagement in Lambeth. Note that many of the 198 leaflets given out in untargeted door-knocking may have been to younger people as we were not working to targeted lists of older people with this project.



We attended 17 community events in Lambeth, hosted by our various partners and friends across south London, reaching 364 people in total. These events were often very well attended, and allowed us to meet and engage with the community – and with the other partners in the 'Warm and Well in Winter' coalition.



We spoke to 189 people living in sheltered housing, across 16 local authority units. Of these we provided further support to 51. We put leaflets through a further 452 letterboxes, although it's worth noting that many of these will not have reached older people, as they were at untargeted addresses on estates across the borough.

Although the Chart 7 shows only 69 interventions, we made 71 in total, as a result of people calling up having received leaflets (or, more commonly, as a result of the manager on the estate calling on their behalf). This number of “retrospective” interventions is lower than in Southwark, simply because in Southwark two of the managers called up with a request for several blankets after we had left.

## 9.2 Lambeth interventions

We made interventions in the cases of 71 people in Lambeth – with 90 individual interventions, as a result of some people receiving more than one.

In the vast majority of cases council referrals were made through SAIL, a process which worked well (although in some instances there was a time lag due to high winter pressures). We also distributed 5 small grants of £100 to help older people whose circumstances had changed to feel less anxious. We delivered 18 blankets and made a combined 28 referrals to South London Cares core activities (Social Clubs and LYN).

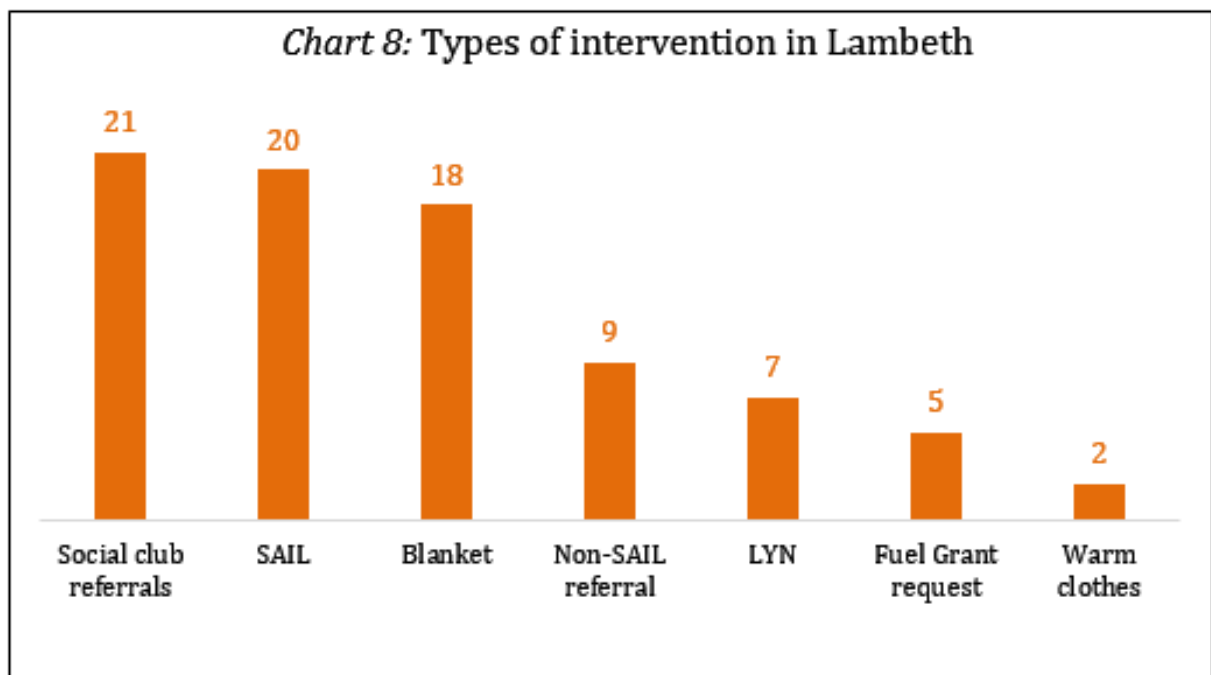
### Case Study 2: Rose

We met Rose when we knocked on her door, at a sheltered housing unit in Streatham. She had lost her husband at Christmas, and was finding it difficult to cope on both a practical and an emotional level. Her television had been cut off, her house was cold, and she was struggling to buy food.

We accelerated Rose's small grant allocation so that she received it as fast as possible, and provided a whole range of other support, including a blanket and a referral to bereavement services.

Rose's English was not fluent, and without her husband she told us she would not have been able to navigate the UK benefits system. She told us that the help she received was hugely valuable at a difficult time.

Chart 8: Types of intervention in Lambeth



## 9.3 Businesses and GPs in Lambeth

### Businesses

To engage with local businesses, we again focused on the big roads running through the borough, and on the small rows of shops, pubs and cafes immediately adjacent to the sheltered housing units in which we were working. Most of the businesses we spoke to were in Streatham, to reflect the fact that many of the community events we presented at and sheltered housing units we door-knocked at were in this area. In order to better reach our target demographic, we chose the businesses at our own discretion, focusing on those that were affordable and had a local or independent feel.

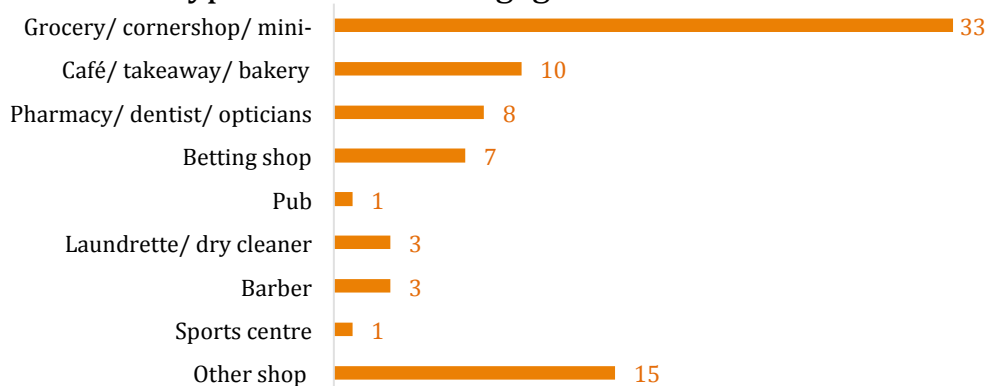
We set aside time specifically for targeting businesses.

With about a third we left stacks of leaflets, and with the other two thirds we were permitted to tack posters into the window. As Chart 9, below, shows, more than half were convenience or food shops of some kind, including some mini-supermarkets such as Tesco's. The 'Other' category includes pet shops, household, hardware, charity shops and Pawnbrokers, among others. There was a particularly high number of pharmacists, which is encouraging, as pharmacists tend to be the first point of contact for individuals with health concerns.

As in Southwark, however, while initial responses to Winter Wellbeing were positive, and businesses were enthusiastic about referring or signposting older neighbours to South London Cares, in reality the fall-off rate was high, and many businesses did not put the leaflets up after initial enthusiasm, or even took them down once we had left. Our much higher overall number of businesses targeted hopefully mitigated some of this drop-off.



*Chart 9: Types of business engaged with in Lambeth*



### GPs

As in Southwark, GPs in Lambeth were difficult to make contact with. We were therefore careful not to let the time-consuming process of calling GPs de-rail the project's other components. Ultimately we only delivered leaflets to two medical centres.

## 10. Key lessons

South London Cares' Winter Wellbeing 2014/15 was a pilot project seeking to establish how well the successful winter projects undertaken by our sister charity north of the river could be replicated in Southwark and Lambeth. It was therefore undertaken, to a certain degree, in the spirit of experimentation – as a trial. Our assessment is that it was very successful in many ways, but that there are also many ways we would seek to improve it in time for winter 2015/2016.

### 10.1 Strengths of Winter Wellbeing 2014/15

Winter Wellbeing achieved scores of positive outcomes this year, and demonstrated, more than anything, that there is a great demand both for practical support and, to an even greater extent, for social and emotional connections within the community.

Indeed, in some ways, we found the need was greater than in Camden and Islington, where processes like gentrification and migration have taken place less abruptly, over a longer period – and where superior transport links mean people are less cut off in winter.



The need for and appreciation of South London Cares' core offer – more intergenerational and cross socio-economic dialogue, greater connectedness, less isolation, etc – is reflected in the very high demand for SLC's Social Clubs and Love Your Neighbour matches (for which there were 53 referrals across both boroughs).

In terms of delivery there are a number of positives for South London Cares to draw from the project's execution:

- **We are now familiar with, and plugged into, cold weather provisions in Southwark and Lambeth**
  - The SAIL referral system is effective and simple – and one South London Cares can work with, and be part of, in future;
  - We have learned much about how local stakeholders work, and potential partners have seen and appreciated the value South London Cares can bring to the local community ecosystem. We have also become part of the overarching 'Warm and Well in Winter' strategy – and are now known by some of the supplementary support offers such as Every Pound Counts;

- **We were able to execute the project efficiently and to time**
  - The outreach element was delivered by the end of the February, with all follow-ups made by the end of the first week of March;
  - We met most of the targets we had set ourselves, delivering £1,000 in fuel grants and forging around 500 interactions in each borough, demonstrating that we have the capacity to repeat, and indeed expand, the project in future.
- **The project allowed us to raise awareness and build partnerships**
  - Over the course of the project we introduced South London Cares – and the services the charity offers – to over 1,000 older people, meaning many people are newly aware of the activities we provide and the support available;
  - We met and built relationships of trust with stakeholders at a large number of sheltered housing schemes, community centres, and churches, all of whom are now familiar with what SLC offers and likely to make referrals.

## 10.2 Weaknesses of Winter Wellbeing 2014/15

While Winter Wellbeing 2014/15 was a success on a practical level, the lack of aggregated address lists was a major barrier to the project fulfilling its potential this year. The piecemeal nature of the random door-knocking, presentations at community events, communications with doctors and businesses and raising awareness through SLC's own Social Clubs – and the liaison with managers and event organisers required to achieve this – meant that this was a more admin-heavy project than previous Winter Wellbeing projects run by our sister charity North London Cares.



The central goal of Winter Wellbeing – and the reason it has been such a unique and well-received project in north London – is that it allows us to reach out to people and identify isolation, health problems, and issues with draughts and cold homes, in a way which would not otherwise happen. While they provide much valued expertise, facilities, and support, council departments and government agencies are rarely able to go out and proactively identify older neighbours most in need – particularly in winter, when resources are stretched. The Winter Wellbeing project therefore performs a key role in making sure older people do not fall through the gaps of statutory provision.

Because South London Cares' Winter Wellbeing project 2014/15 relied on social events and sheltered housing, but did not include outreach to the most potentially vulnerable on their own doorsteps this key aspect of the work was partly lost.



- **Sheltered housing**

- Sheltered housing residents were in most cases very well looked after on a practical level (the main complaint was often that rooms were, if anything, too warm), with 24-hour support from a shared sheltered housing manager and, sometimes, carers. Thanks to bills being included within rent, fuel poverty was less of an issue than it was in independent living, and the sense was that even very small problems were being fixed quickly;
- We often filled out SAIL forms, only to find that problems were already being dealt with by the housing unit managers, or else delivered blankets only to discover that Age UK was already in the process of bringing them;

- **Community outreach events**

- The community outreach events were successful, but here there was a self-selecting bias, in so far as those willing and able to come to supermarkets and social activities are, by definition, the least likely to be deeply isolated or infirm – indeed, many turned up with carers or family members;
- As we have seen, community outreach events were also the least likely to yield deeper interventions, and while they played a key role in allowing us to raise awareness of the project and the ways in which people could be supported through the winter – and make people feel valued and visible – they were less successful as a way of identifying deep need.

There was therefore a sense, in the cases of both sheltered housing and community outreach events, that we were “preaching to the converted”.

This is not to say that the 147 people in whose cases we intervened were not individuals in need of help. Often their state was very urgent. Indeed, due to the fact that individuals at sheltered housing units are often more vulnerable than those living entirely independently, problems we did identify were sometimes very severe.



Nevertheless, there was a feeling that we were at times overlapping with other organisations in giving help to those who were already provided for – and therefore missing vulnerable individuals outside sheltered housing units not identified through any of Southwark and Lambeth’s other cold weather services. This is something we aim to improve next year.



## 10.3 Solutions

It appears that there are two broad alternatives to solving this problem:

- **The first – and ideal – solution would be the acquisition of aggregated address lists of over-65s in Southwark and Lambeth, ideally through a partnership or commission directly from the councils (as is the case with North London Cares)**
  - This is something we could work very closely with both Lambeth and Southwark councils on, to ensure that data protection is adhered to throughout, staff are vetted, and all records are destroyed after use;
  - SLC's sister charity in north London has worked closely with Camden and Islington councils in this way – for instance, by receiving only the most basic and stripped information, and by obtaining data in very small quantities at a time.
- **The second solution would be that, in preparation for next year's Winter Wellbeing project, South London Cares maintains the focus on sheltered housing and social events, but hones and adapts its cold weather offer**
  - For instance, we could take full ownership of blanket/ winter pack deliveries, or else lead on the calendar of events, so that we are delivering the central “syllabus” of cold weather information given out;
  - This would not be an ideal outcome, as it would still mean that those potentially struggling most (individuals not in sheltered housing) are not being reached by any aspect of the community outreach coalition – but it would ensure South London Cares is not thought to be overlapping with other agencies.



## 10.4 Other challenges and recommendations

Aside from these larger structural points we have some smaller ideas for how our Winter Wellbeing project could operate better in future years:

- **Move GP interviews to the wider South London Cares remit**
  - The GP outreach component of Winter Wellbeing is the most time consuming and least fruitful, and – given the difficulty of contacting GPs at the best of times – seems like something which should effectively be a project in itself;
  - We should therefore consider, with future projects, restricting the GP element to purely the delivery of leaflets, which most surgeries are amenable to, and consider liaising with GPs about social prescriptions as part of a wider, year-round goal for South London Cares, in partnership with the local Clinical Commissioning Groups.
- **Translate the literature into different languages**
  - Southwark and Lambeth are ultra-diverse boroughs; having leaflets in different languages is something which has worked well in north London and could equally be applied in south London – we could work with stakeholders to identify the languages where translation would be of most use.
- **Do more to get volunteers directly involved**
  - South London Cares did not have the level of volunteer involvement in the Winter Wellbeing project that we do with the Social Clubs and Love Your Neighbour projects, partly because the work – presenting to large groups, and building key relationships with sheltered housing managers, for instance – requires professional focus and is not suitable for volunteers with low time commitments;
  - In future we need to think about how to incorporate our growing volunteer base in both boroughs.
- **Do more to identify isolation in private housing**
  - There are many people in both boroughs who are asset-rich but cash poor, and a long-term aim might be to try to reach private tenants and homeowners, whose isolation often goes even further beneath the radar.

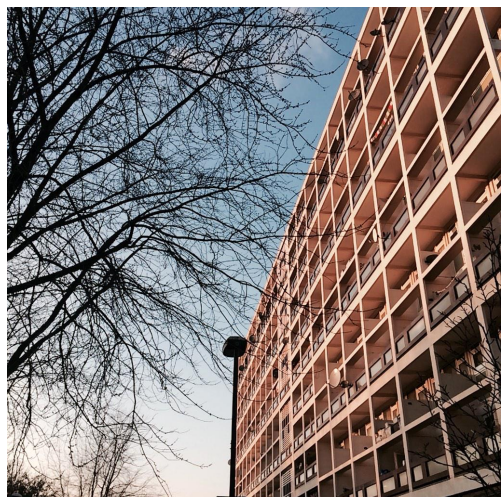


## 11. Conclusion

Although we have had a comparatively mild winter this year, the short days, wet and grey weekends and colder weather can still entrench poor health and cause social bonds to wither away, even if temporarily. The Winter Wellbeing project is now a mainstay in north London, and its successful execution in the southern boroughs this year has shown that there is a **real appetite and need for the project** here too. This is demonstrated by the high number of referrals – especially to South London Cares’ Social Clubs – and the overwhelmingly positive responses we received on the doorsteps.



The value of the project is in its ability to ensure even the most ill or isolated neighbours **do not fall through the gaps** in state and other community provision, and to embed a **preventative approach** whereby **practical, social and emotional issues** are identified before they become emergencies – and whereby people learn how they can get the support or connections they need to live **more fulfilling lives**. The need for this was very much evident in Southwark and Lambeth, two boroughs with high deprivation, relatively poor transport links, and a “hyper-gentrification” in recent years resulting from steep hikes in house prices and the ongoing globalisation and economic transformation of inner-London.



As the population in these communities ages, people live longer and other local authority services are reduced it is vital that this holistic offer – of practical, social and emotional outreach and connection during one of the toughest, most isolating periods of the year – is continued.

South London Cares’ 2014/15 Winter Wellbeing project has barely scraped the surface of the issue, and yet has already identified hundreds of people in need of support. We believe that this demonstrates South London Cares’ potential to add value for the long term in these communities – particularly if this project is rolled out in scope, to non-sheltered housing properties, and possibly to other parts of the year beyond the winter. With some amendments this project can become a means by which communities are reassured and those in need of help are identified early and dealt with proactively by organisations that can remain proximate and relatable.

As demographics in both Southwark and Lambeth continue to change rapidly over the coming decade, and healthcare services are integrated further into the community through Clinical Commissioning Groups and other national and local government changes, we believe that targeted outreach, isolation identification and integrated community projects such as Winter Wellbeing, alongside the ‘Warm and Well in Winter’ coalition, will become ever more important.

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