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1.0 Introduction

The UK Government Strategy for Loneliness defines it as a:

‘Subjective, unwelcome feeling of lack or loss of companionship. It happens when we have a mismatch between the quantity and quality of social relationships that we have, and those that we want.’¹

In England, 46% of adults experience loneliness occasionally or more often. Those most likely to feel lonely are people with a long-term disability, widowed homeowners, unmarried middle-agers, and young renters. This is particularly the case for those living in urban areas.²

These facts mean the two age groups most at risk from experiencing loneliness – particularly in a city like London – are those who are 65 years old and above, and those in their 20s and 30s. **South London Cares was set up in 2014 to tackle the social isolation and loneliness felt by these two generations in Southwark and Lambeth.**

As the definition above states, the key lies in social relationships. South London Cares’ four programmes connect older and younger neighbours so they can share fun, friendship, and new experiences and help one another out in our rapidly changing city.

For older neighbours, loneliness tends to result from a reduction of mobility, confidence, or network, causing a loss of connection with the people and the places around them. They lose their sense of community and, with it, all of the practical, emotional, and social support that results from relationships built around togetherness and belonging.

Winter Wellbeing was created to provide support in these circumstances. For six months from October to March, it aims to identify those suffering or at risk from loneliness and helps them stay warm, active, and connected during the coldest and most isolating months of the year.



WINTER WELLBEING

IF YOU'RE OVER 65, WE CAN HELP YOU STAY **WARM, ACTIVE, AND CONNECTED** DURING THE WINTER

FROM OCTOBER 2019 TO MARCH 2020, WE CAN:

-  **PROVIDE FREE WARM ITEMS**
Deliver **thermal clothing, blankets, flasks and other warm items** direct to your door.
-  **KEEP YOUR HOME WARM**
Connect you to organisations that can **improve your home's energy efficiency** and help **reduce your bills**.
-  **ASSIST WITH FINANCES**
Arrange **small grants** and **specialist advice** for people in difficult circumstances who are struggling to afford everything they need to get through the tough winter months.
-  **CONNECT YOU TO YOUR COMMUNITY**
Introduce you to brilliant **social activities** in your local area.

To find out more call us on 0207 118 0404 (option 1)

South London Cares is a UK registered company, number 8757344 and a UK registered charity, number 1157401.

¹ [House of Commons Briefing Paper no. 8515. Tackling Loneliness. 21 February 2020. Page 4.](#)

² [Department for Culture, Media and Sport. Community Life Survey 2018-19. Pages 2-8.](#)

1.1 The support offered

The project offers support in the following ways:

- ✓ **Providing free warm items** – delivering blankets, hot water bottles, thermos flasks, hats, gloves, scarves, and socks direct to neighbours' doors.
- ✓ **Keeping homes warm** – connecting neighbours to Energy Doctor services which can help improve their homes' energy efficiency and reduce their bills.
- ✓ **Assisting with finances** – arranging small grants and specialist advice for people in difficult circumstances who are struggling to afford everything they need to get through the tough winter months.
- ✓ **Introducing South London Cares' Social Club and Love Your Neighbour programmes** so neighbours can build friendships and share new experiences.
- ✓ **Connecting to the community** – introducing neighbours to any social activities, advice, and specialist support in their local area that could help improve their wellbeing and sense of togetherness.

1.2 Building on previous projects

Last year's project was the largest to date, with 1,669 neighbours engaged and 359 of them provided with deeper support. At the end of each project, we reflect on strengths and challenges to improve the reach of future work and continue adapting to the ever-changing landscape. A number of recommendations were made for this year's project:

- **Work more closely with housing providers** so we can reach neighbours who might otherwise be hard to identify, or who we have not yet met through previous outreach activities.
- **Develop deeper relationships with a smaller number of community partners** rather than trying to do too much with too many people.
- **Focus on activities that allow us to spend more one-on-one time with neighbours** rather than relying on quick conversations or talking to large groups.
- **Achieve a more even balance of work across Southwark and Lambeth**, particularly with regard to the distribution of Winter Wellbeing grants.
- **Work more closely with sibling charities in The Cares Family** to establish best practice for data collection and reporting using our new database/CRM software.

These suggestions were built into this year's work and proved to be an essential influence on its success.

2.0 Delivery

Person-centred approach

Older neighbours were introduced to the project through four different streams of work:

1. Collaborating with **housing providers**
2. Attending **community outreach** engagements and events
3. Processing **referrals** from partner organisations and individuals
4. Communicating with our **existing network**

The different avenues of work allowed us to connect with neighbours in a range of contexts. Initial conversations took place face-to-face or over the phone. Depending on a neighbour's situation, these were often followed up with further conversations and sometimes involved a visit to their home. Utilising a person-centred approach meant we spent as much time as needed with each neighbour to gain an insight into their current levels of wellbeing and then identify any areas for potential support.

2.1 Housing providers

Previous projects have acknowledged that community outreach activities may not enable us to meet those who are most isolated, or most at risk of isolation. To take Winter Wellbeing to people where they are – in, or very near, their homes – we partnered with two housing providers on two different projects.

Hyde Housing

[Hyde Housing](#) is a national housing association with properties in both Southwark and Lambeth. We partnered with the [Hyde Foundation](#), their community investment department, to introduce their older residents to the project. Our collaboration involved two elements: door-knocking and community outreach.

Door knocking activities began by sending letters to residents aged 65 and over at 320 addresses in Southwark and Lambeth, most of whom lived alone. They were introduced to the project and given the option to opt-out, which 24 of them did.



We subsequently spent ten outreach sessions during November and December knocking on 180 doors in Lambeth and 116 doors in Southwark. We spoke with 114 residents and provided 54 of them with 182 interventions. Of these neighbours, 50 were new to South London Cares.

Visiting Hyde's residents also introduced us to areas and estates where we had not previously spent much time. The second part of the project involved attending community events and groups that were supported by Hyde within these areas. We joined two groups and spoke to 45 people, providing 11 of them with 14 interventions. 10 of these neighbours were new to South London Cares.

The direct line of communication we had with Hyde meant requests for housing support were followed up promptly and effectively. **Our independent involvement proved beneficial for all parties – Hyde demonstrated that they were committed to their residents, residents felt listened to and supported, and we reached people we had not met before.** We hope to continue this work in the future.

Laconia, 92. We met Laconia door-knocking in Bermondsey. She was struggling with the cold and had an ongoing issue in the communal space of her flats. We provided her with some warm items, a Winter Wellbeing grant, and informed Hyde of her housing issue. Laconia told us she was named after a ship from her native Sierra Leone and worked her whole life in the UK as a midwife. As a keen creator of patchwork quilts, she was very happy as the hot water bottle we provided helped to keep her hands warm and dextrous.



Watmos Community Homes

[Watmos Community Homes](#) are a national landlord who own and manage three housing estates in Lambeth: Ethelred in Kennington, Thorlands in Camberwell, and Metra in Streatham. We met their Community Development Officer through an informal network of local organisations in the north of Lambeth. Having learned that Watmos were running activities to keep their residents happy, connected, and safe, we partnered with them to hold coffee mornings on each of their estates during November.



Letters were sent to 165 residents aged 65 years and above informing them of their relevant coffee morning and introducing them to Winter Wellbeing. Over the three events, we spoke with 30 residents and provided 25 of them with 112 interventions. Of these neighbours, 21 were new to us.

Those we met told us that they appreciated the opportunity to learn about the project, explore the support available, and spend time with other people from their neighbourhood. The partnership proved a successful part of Watmos' work to engage their communities and enabled us to spend time with people we had not yet met.

Following the project, Watmos offered to host our March Winter Wrap-up event at their community space in Camberwell, which was due to bring 13 partner organisations together with 50 older neighbours. The event was unfortunately cancelled as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, **but it further demonstrates how building collaborative relationships with partners can lead to positive outcomes that reach broadly and deeply into a community.**

Albert, 78. In Camberwell, Albert explained he had a cold home and was spending so much money on energy that he had to choose between heating or eating. We provided him with some warm items and visited him at home a few days later.

Watmos were already looking into his windows, but we also referred him to [Repowering London](#) for further support and advice on his bills. We signposted him to various food support, including [Lambeth Larder](#), and provided him with a Winter Wellbeing grant. Albert also explained he was dealing with the death of two close family members, so we referred him to [Cruse Bereavement Care](#).

Albert was undeterred by his situation and full of positivity and faith. He told us that he lived by the mantra: **'When you do good, good will follow you'.**

2.2 Community outreach

Over the years, we have forged relationships with local organisations, groups, and businesses to ensure we continue to reach older neighbours and keep them informed of the activities and support available. Incorporating last year's recommendations meant we focused on attending events that were held by trusted partners, and where we had the opportunity to speak with individuals or small groups. We also ran our event – the [Winter Warmer](#) – in November to celebrate these partnerships.

Community partner events

We attended 12 events held by partner organisations across both boroughs, which offered a mixture of contexts and opportunities.

In October, we attended the Tony Lyons Memorial held by [Southwark Pensioners](#) and spoke with individuals who wanted to know more about the project. In November, we attended [Brixton Leisure Centre](#) and spent nearly two hours with the age 60+ exercise club, speaking to the group as a whole and then individuals about their specific circumstances. In December, we spent an afternoon with the [Valley Road Surgery Patient Participatory Group](#), running a quiz at their Christmas dinner before introducing the project and the support available to the group and individuals.

Throughout the project, we attended five different events at Guy's and St Thomas' hospitals. Our relationships with their Older Person's Units mean they regularly offer us opportunities to meet their patients and spend time with them.



Brian, 80. At a 'Strength & Balance' clinic in Guy's hospital, we met Irene, who asked us to attend a group she ran called the Friday Club, which met every week in Kennington. We went along a few weeks later and spoke to 15 people, providing six with further support. One of them was Brian, who we delivered some warm items to, signed up to our Social Club programme, and signposted to a community partner for some specialist advice. Meeting Brian was thanks to Irene's dedication as a champion of community connection. She told us: **'people need connection as we get older. It's important to keep our minds sharp!'**

During the 12 community events, we spoke with 197 neighbours and provided 100 of them with 183 interventions. **More than half of the people we spoke to at these events received further support from us.**

Our Winter Warmer event

In last year's project, we hosted South London Cares' first-ever outreach event, which was a highly effective way of supporting our partners and introducing our neighbours to their work. At the beginning of November, we built on that success by holding our 'Winter Warmer' at [Pembroke House](#) in Walworth.



A total of 20 partners from 13 organisations met 41 of our older neighbours. Display stands allowed partners to speak with individuals, and a number of them also presented to the group. Our blog, [Winter warmth and wellbeing](#), provides further details of the event and includes links to the partners in attendance.

These events will continue to form an important part of future projects. They offer us an opportunity to develop our working relationships with partners and help to keep neighbours informed of the brilliant work going on in their community.

2.3 Referrals

Another vital part of our work with partners involves the establishment and maintenance of mutual signposting and referral pathways. Working this way enables us to safely and reliably manage and request support for neighbours.

Referrals from partners

This year we completed 120 referrals for 87 neighbours, 72 of whom were new to South London Cares. They were predominantly made through our [online referral form](#)

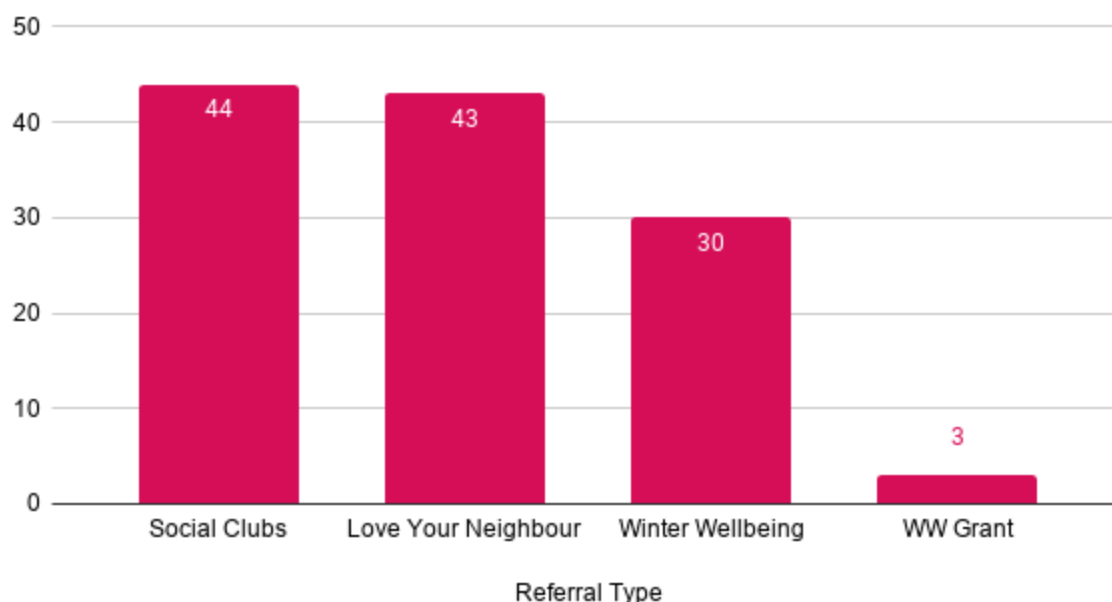
and came from 20 different organisations and six family members, friends and neighbours. Details of these partners are in Appendix A.

Jim, 88. Jim, from Camberwell, was referred to our Social Club and Love Your Neighbour programmes by the [British Red Cross](#). Upon speaking with him, we told him about Winter Wellbeing, and he requested some warm items. We also signed Jim up to our Social Clubs and in February he came along to Men's Pub Club in Camberwell. He shared tales of his travels and explained how he covers his hat in pin badges from all the places he's visited. We hope Jim continues to bring himself and his wonderful stories to our clubs.



The graph below shows how many referrals partners made to each of our programmes, which we then successfully processed.

Completed Referrals Received by Type



Self-referrals

We also received self-referrals from 37 older neighbours, 17 of whom were new to us this year. We went on to provide them with 116 interventions.

Isa, 80. We met Isa in Herne Hill during last year's Winter Wellbeing project, and provided her with some warm items, a small grant, and signed her up to Social Clubs. Isa called us this year and requested similar support. This time we also referred to [SHINE](#), and have been in touch with [Lambeth Council](#) on her behalf. **Isa recently referred a friend to us because she has been so happy with the support she's received.**



2.4 Existing network

Our final area of work involved reaching out to those already in our network. Through our programmes, we build long-lasting and trusting relationships with our neighbours. It is important for us to check in with them regularly, update them about how they can be involved, and respond to any requests they make for further support or connection.

Re-engagement

Our re-engagement work involves contacting neighbours who receive our Social Clubs programme, but whom we haven't seen for six months or more. We completed five sessions of re-engagement and had 119 conversations which led to 40 interventions for 17 neighbours.

Godwin, 69. We first met Godwin in Herne Hill during last year's Winter Wellbeing project and signed him up to our Social Clubs programme. We called him in our January re-engagement session as he hadn't yet made it to a club. He explained that his mobility had made it harder for him to get about. We therefore told Godwin about [Love Your Neighbour](#), and he was keen to find out more. The LYN team assessed him shortly afterwards and subsequently matched with Ross. Godwin is originally from Barbados, which inspired the two of them to enjoy a celebratory rum.



Love Your Neighbour

South London Cares' Love Your Neighbour team sent letters introducing Winter Wellbeing to 122 older neighbours currently matched with younger friends or awaiting matches, which led to 26 interventions for 16 neighbours. Throughout the year, the Love Your Neighbour team provides regular and ongoing support for the older neighbours on the programme, some of which involves referring them to community partners. During the six months of the project, the team referred 41 neighbours to 58 partner organisations.

Daisy, 93. Daisy lives in Streatham and was referred to Love Your Neighbour by [Age UK Lambeth](#). When we assessed her, she explained she needed some practical help around the house, so we referred her to [GoodGym](#). Daisy was also struggling with the cold so was provided with some warm items and referred to [SHINE](#). They arranged for Daisy to receive her Warm Homes discount through British Gas, but she needed help to add this to her prepaid energy meter, so we did this for her. **Daisy's story brilliantly demonstrates how a community can provide effective support by working together.** We spoke to her about the support she had received from everyone and she told us: **'I am so thankful. Thank you so much, to all of you.'**

Social Clubs

South London Cares' Social Club team included details of the Winter Wellbeing project in our October programme, took flyers into some of our clubs, and spoke with anyone who wanted to find out more. This led to 29 interventions for 13 older neighbours.



Darret, 69. Darret lives in Camberwell and has been an invested member of our network for a number of years, having attended well over 100 social clubs. She got in touch with us after seeing the Winter Wellbeing project in the Social Club programme. As a keen and very able gardener, she needed some warm items so she could stay outside for longer during the winter. We also provided her with a small grant to put towards her bills. Darret also mentioned that Christmas could be a tricky time for her, so we gave her the contact number for [The Silverline](#), who provide a 24/7 support line for older people.

3.0 Project in numbers

During this year's project, South London Cares:

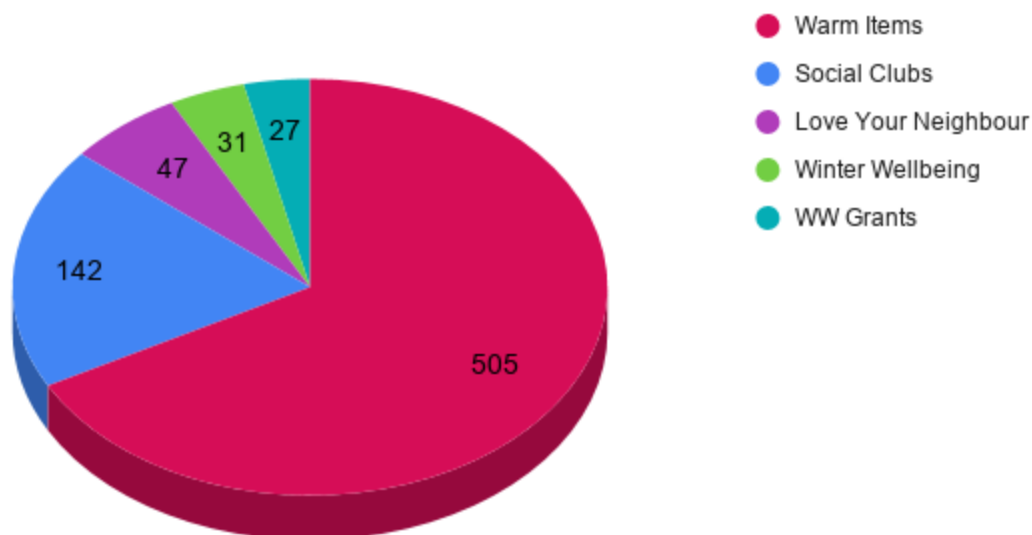
- **Shared 955 conversations with older neighbours** – 683 face-to-face and 272 over the phone
- **Knocked on 296 doors** – 180 in Lambeth and 116 in Southwark
- **Attended 12 outreach events** held by community partners
- **Hosted one outreach event of our own** – our Winter Warmer
- **Received 120 referrals for 87 older neighbours** – from 20 partner organisations plus friends, family members, and neighbours
- **Received self-referrals from 37 older neighbours** and supported them with 116 interventions
- **Provided 389 neighbours with interventions** – 234 in Lambeth, 130 in Southwark, and 25 from elsewhere:
 - 270 of these were new to South London Cares
 - 220 received more than one intervention
- **Completed 1,055 interventions in total:**
 - Delivered 505 warm items to 181 neighbours
 - Signed 142 neighbours up to our Social Club mailing list
 - Referred 47 neighbours to our Love Your Neighbour Programme
 - Processed 27 Winter Wellbeing Grant applications
- **Awarded 22 Winter Wellbeing Grants totalling £1,620:**
 - £880 to 12 neighbours in Lambeth
 - £740 to 10 neighbours in Southwark
- **Referred 57 neighbours for Energy Doctor support** from SHINE or Repowering London
- **Made a total of 303 signposts and referrals** to 80 partner organisations and community groups, which related to 178 neighbours (see graph below)
- **Processed 76 unsuccessful interventions.** We were not able to complete these because neighbours were: already part of our network, did not meet our referral criteria, changed their minds, obtained support from elsewhere, or stopped responding to us. On a few occasions, we were unable to find a solution. In these cases, we share our learning so we can help to identify gaps.
- **Continue to work on 31 interventions** – for 31 neighbours, as were not able to complete them by the end of the project. 24 of these are LYN referrals.
- **43% of the people we spoke with took up an offer of further support** – up from 20% last year
- **56% of neighbours provided with support received more than one intervention** – more than double last year's 25%

Sources of all support provided	Conversations	Interventions	Neighbours
Housing providers			
Hyde door-knocking	114	182	56
Hyde community outreach	45	14	11
Watmos coffee mornings	30	112	25
Community Outreach			
Brixton Rec 60+ Group	15	46	14
Winter Warmer Social Club	41	44	41
Valley Road PPG Christmas Lunch	37	20	9
The Friday Club	15	16	6
SPC - Tony Lyons Memorial	30	15	7
GSTT OPAU Come and Try Day	10	15	8
Third Age Coffee Club Norwood Road	7	13	4
Streatham Patient Group – Well & Warm	25	7	5
GSTT Older Person's Day	3	3	3
Guys Strength and Balance clinic (x3)	27	3	3
West Norwood Library	3	1	1
Referrals			
Referrals from partners	133	120	87
Self-referrals	41	116	37
Existing Network			
Re-engagement	119	40	17
Love Your Neighbour WW letters	122	26	16
Love Your Neighbour support	41	58	41
Social Clubs	32	29	13
Outreach	65	175	58
TOTALS	955	1,055	-

NB: The total number of neighbours is not included because we supported some individuals in more than one context, which creates duplicates. The project provided a total of 389 older neighbours with further support.

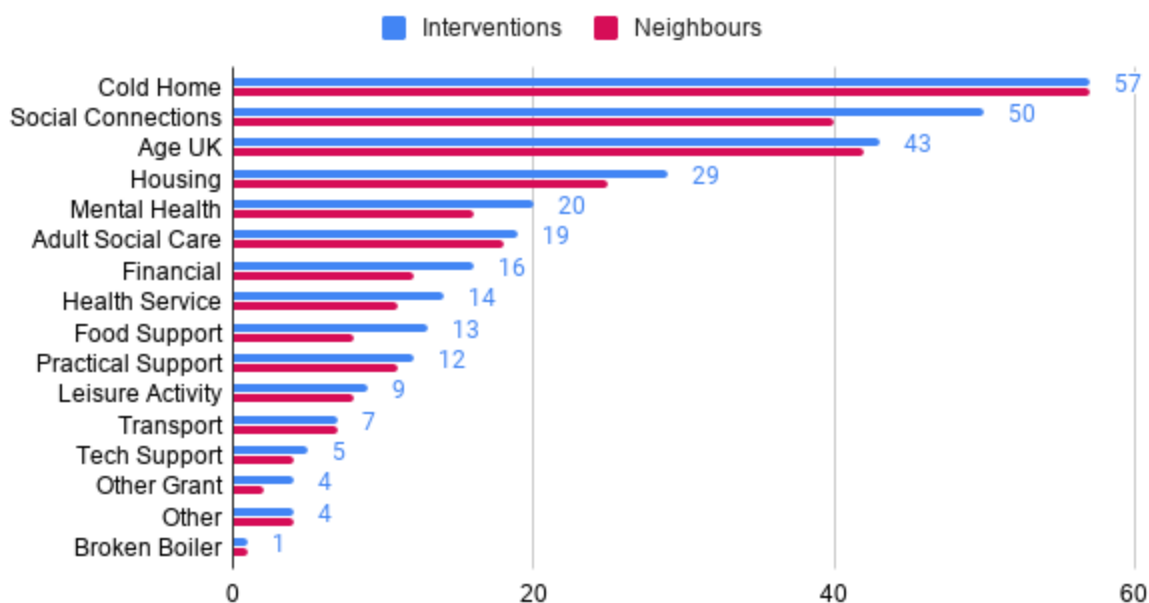
The graph below shows the distribution of interventions that remained within South London Cares' programmes.

SLC Programme Interventions



The graph below shows the signposting and referral interventions that we made to partners, differentiated by type.

Signposting and Referral Interventions



4.0 Case studies

The numbers tell an important story, but they do not tell the whole story. The various case studies above show the different ways we meet neighbours through Winter Wellbeing and the support we then provide. The case studies below demonstrate how the project enables us to build relationships by developing rapport, gaining trust, and nurturing relationships that can change people's lives.



4.1 Initial contact – Bertha, 75. We visited Bertha in Peckham after she'd found one of our leaflets and called us requesting some warm items. **We explained the other types of support available, but Bertha was happy that the warm items were all she needed to get through winter.** She loved that our hat matched her colourful outfit and went on to tell us: 'the sign of a good flask is if you can hear it sing'. Ours passed the test!

4.2 Building rapport – Samuel, 66. We met Samuel in Kennington through door-knocking at Hyde Housing homes. He'd had bad experiences with organisations so was a little sceptical, but we provided some warm items and spoke to Hyde about a problem he was having in his flat. **Samuel later asked for some advice regarding a separate issue, which we looked into and were able to help him.** He proudly showed us that his polka dot Begonia was flowering in November. We'll get in touch with Samuel again on next year's project to check in with him.



4.3 Gaining trust – Carmen, 94. Carmen was referred to Love Your Neighbour in December by the [British Red Cross](#). We told her about Winter Wellbeing and gave her some warm items. At the time, she did not want any other support but has since been back in touch to ask for further assistance. **Carmen has now been matched on our Covid-19 response Phone-A-Friend programme and is enjoying new connection and companionship.**

4.4 Sharing the network – Sandra and Rose, 67 and 76. We met Sandra during last year’s Winter Wellbeing project. We re-engaged her at the start of this year’s project, and she requested some additional assistance. During an update call, Sandra put her friend Rose on the phone. We subsequently visited Rose and went on to provide her with a variety of support. She had a smile like sunshine and having worked in her local community until recently she beamed as she told us: **“young people are in my heart!”**

We met Rose because we’d spent time building a good relationship with Sandra, to the point she was willing to invite her friend to speak with us.



4.5 Life changing connections – Tony, 74. Tony was referred to Love Your Neighbour during last year’s project. We got in touch, told him about the support available and provided some warm items and a small grant. We also signed him up to our Social Clubs. Our Love Your Neighbour team matched Tony to a younger neighbour in February 2019, and he has been bringing joy to his friendships and our network ever since. **In December, Tony came along on his own to his first Social Club – our Winter Party – which was a huge milestone for him.**



In May 2020, Tony told us this:

'My family all passed away so I've had years of being on my own. The loneliness and isolation has been desperate at times to be honest. Then this came around at just the right time. 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.

Parin is a smashing lad. We both like football and snooker and used to chat about them whilst we were walking in Brockwell Park or at the local cafe. 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. I came to the party that you had, and I enjoyed that. You even got me up on the dance floor!

Parin has been busy with work recently. I was going to the cafe and the park with Callum, but now that we can't see each other [due to the Covid-19 lockdown] he phones me regularly instead. He quizzes me on Crystal Palace! He's a good bloke, I like him. It's nice to interact with younger people because I don't want to be some old fogey moaning all the time! South London Cares has made such a big effort to include me and make me feel part of it all.'

Tony's journey has been so joyous and impactful that he now does what he can to support our work. He recorded [this video](#) for our Big Give campaign this year. Tony's story is testament to what can result from nurturing trusting, reliable, and mutually beneficial relationships.



5.0 Project strengths

The project becomes more ambitious as it develops year on year. The ongoing combination of breadth and depth make it challenging to deliver, but the results suggest that older people living in Southwark and Lambeth continue to benefit.

5.1 Strength in numbers

During this year's project, South London Cares:

- **Developed our work with housing providers** by knocking on 296 doors – more than ever before – and jointly hosting three free coffee mornings. Through these collaborative ventures, we gained access to places we had not been before and welcomed 81 new neighbours to our network.
- **Directly supported 389 neighbours with deeper interventions, of which 270 were new to us.** These are the largest numbers we have achieved on the project to date.
- **Provided 1,055 interventions in total** – also the largest number to date, despite the fact we spoke to considerably fewer people this year (955 compared to 1,669 last year).
- **Delivered 505 warm items to 181 neighbours** – compared to last year's figures of 266 items for 66 neighbours.
- **Awarded a more even split of grants between each borough** – £880 to 12 neighbours in Lambeth, and £740 to 10 neighbours in Southwark.
- **Engaged our existing network more effectively** through re-engagement and written communications with neighbours on our Social Club and Love Your Neighbour programmes. We reached 1,152 neighbours in total, which led to 153 interventions for 87 neighbours.
- **Made 303 external referrals to 80 partner organisations for 178 neighbours.**
- **Provided further support to 43% of the people we spoke to, and 56% of these received more than one intervention** – both of these figures are more than double last year's figures.

5.2 Strength in stories

Numbers only ever tell so much. Behind the data, there are real people with characters, anecdotes, opinions, and hopes. An increasingly important part of this project is to provide a platform for these stories to be shared.

Our social media communications during the project embraced these stories. It's vital to get feedback about the difference the project makes and how appreciative people are for our support. **However, we have a far more significant impact when we use our voice to celebrate the people we meet and the places we visit.**

So, we told people about [Samuel](#) and his season defying Begonia, [Brenda](#) and her desire to hike and skydive, [John](#) the 70-year-old psychedelic house DJ, and [Laconia](#) with her unique name and love of quilting. We spoke about the [iconic towers in Stockwell](#) and the vast differences in circumstances that can lie behind each and every door we knock on. And we highlighted partners and groups like the [Friday Club](#), which exist thanks to the determination and love of community champions like Irene.

5.3 Strength in community

The biggest strength of the project lies in the fact it is rooted in community. The project simply wouldn't exist without the input and support of individuals and groups across both boroughs.

The warm items we provide act as an introduction to the project and to South London Cares. **These items are donated to us each year by corporate partners, meaning they are given by the community, for the community.** This year, the companies STR Data and NKD Delivery donated over 500 items, and 181 neighbours were able to keep warm and well as a result.



The project is part funded by donations made during the Big Give campaign – a matched fundraising campaign lasting one week in December where all donations are doubled. This year, 122 supporters contributed, ensuring we made our £12,000 target. **Without this generosity, the project would not exist.**



The project relies heavily on the relationships we have with community partners.

We worked in collaboration with housing providers, attended community events, and made and received more referrals than ever before. Of the 1,055 interventions we completed during this year's project, at least 611 were a direct result of our work with partners. And there are many more that indirectly resulted from these connections.

Of particular note were the 303 referrals we made to 80 partners so they can receive specialist advice, information, and connection to activities. **So much of the support we provide is through signposting and referring to other community groups.** It has become increasingly important as our knowledge of the local landscape grows, and our partner relationships have developed. It also relies on cultivating effective referral pathways to organisations willing and able to support the neighbours we point in their direction.

The case study below provides a good example of how neighbours can benefit from a variety of signposting and referrals.

Jo, 82. We met Jo in Stockwell through our [Hyde](#) door-knocking activities. She was feeling the cold so we provided some warm items and made a referral to [Repowering London](#). Her mobility had recently worsened, and moving around her home was getting harder, so we referred her to [Lambeth Adult Social Care](#) for a care needs assessment. Jo was also keen to get involved in some local social activities so, as well as signing her up to our [Social Club](#) programme, we signposted her to [Age UK Lambeth](#) and [Southwark Irish Pensioners Project](#). Jo still gets out and about when she can and loves to admire the green-fingered activities going on: **"I love to see the little plots they have locally. People growing veg and things!"**

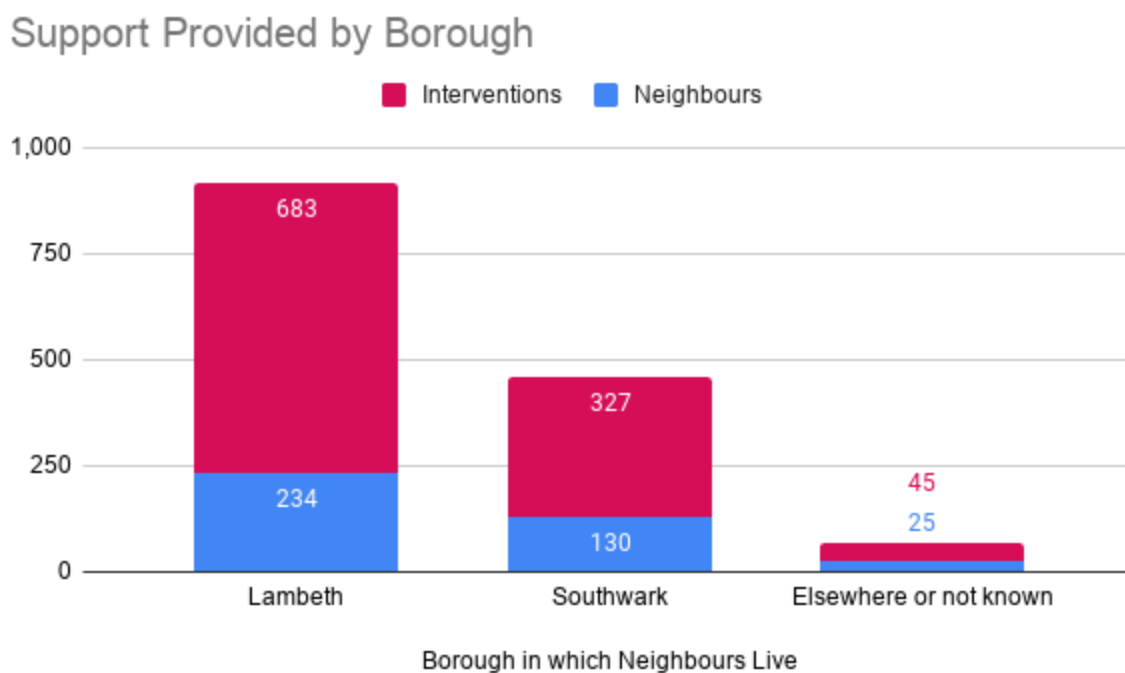
Winter Wellbeing exists and succeeds through the strength of collaboration - the community comes together to both create and support it.

6.0 Challenges and recommendations

As with every year, the project had challenges. As a result, some recommendations are made for the consideration of future projects.

6.1 Southwark/Lambeth split

While we achieved our aim of a more even split of Winter Wellbeing grant awards across the two boroughs, our figures were generally Lambeth heavy. 60% of the door knocking we did was in Lambeth, and all of the work we did with Watmos was in Lambeth. But that only tells part of the story. Southwark has a broader coverage of older person services throughout the borough, primarily through the [COPSINS](#) consortium, which could mean we have a smaller presence because neighbours have other organisations to turn to.



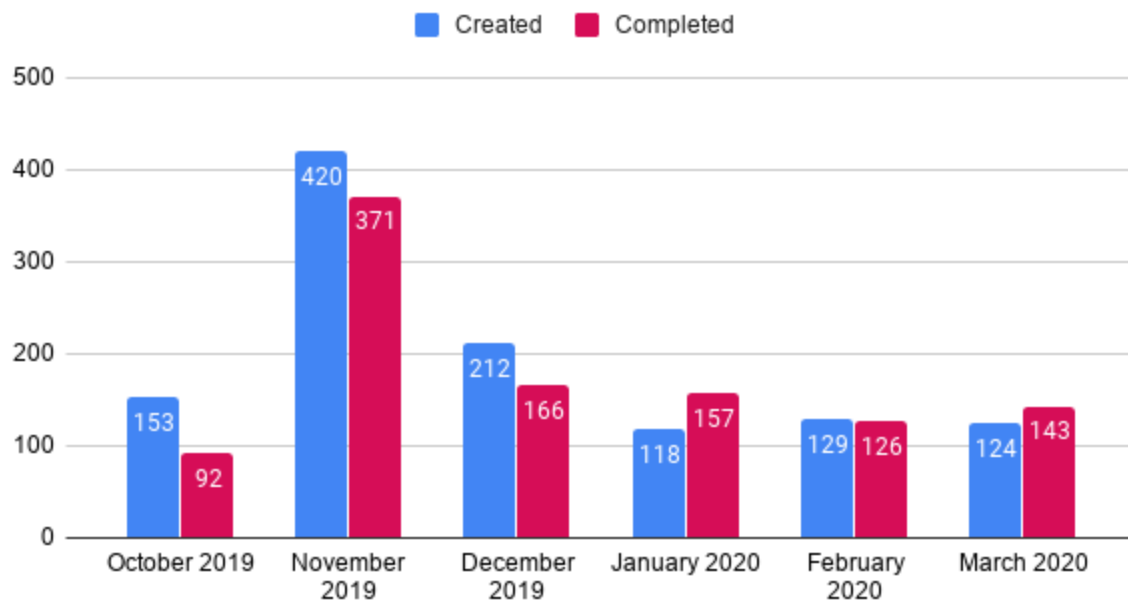
Recommendation: Whether we are able to establish a reason for this variance or not, we should proactively dedicate more time and energy to working in Southwark communities and with Southwark residents.

6.2 Capacity

The project reached full capacity very quickly and became so busy over the first three months that the second half of the project became more reactive. We had to cancel or withdraw from a few engagements and commitments. More importantly, some neighbours had to wait longer than is ideal to receive the support that had been requested. There are a few reasons for this:

- The project is well known now, and we were quickly inundated with referrals and invitations to outreach engagements. By the end of November, we had created 573 interventions and by Christmas, we had created 785.
- South London Cares' additional capacity to support the project – our Outreach Officer – didn't start until the middle of October.
- Door-knocking with Hyde and the coffee mornings with Watmos were all completed in November and December, as previously agreed.

Interventions Created and Completed by Month



Recommendation: Make sure the Outreach Officer starts on 1st October, and spread commitments out more evenly to prevent overcommitting. This will allow some flexibility and spare capacity to deal with referrals and other reactive opportunities.

6.3 Tough realities

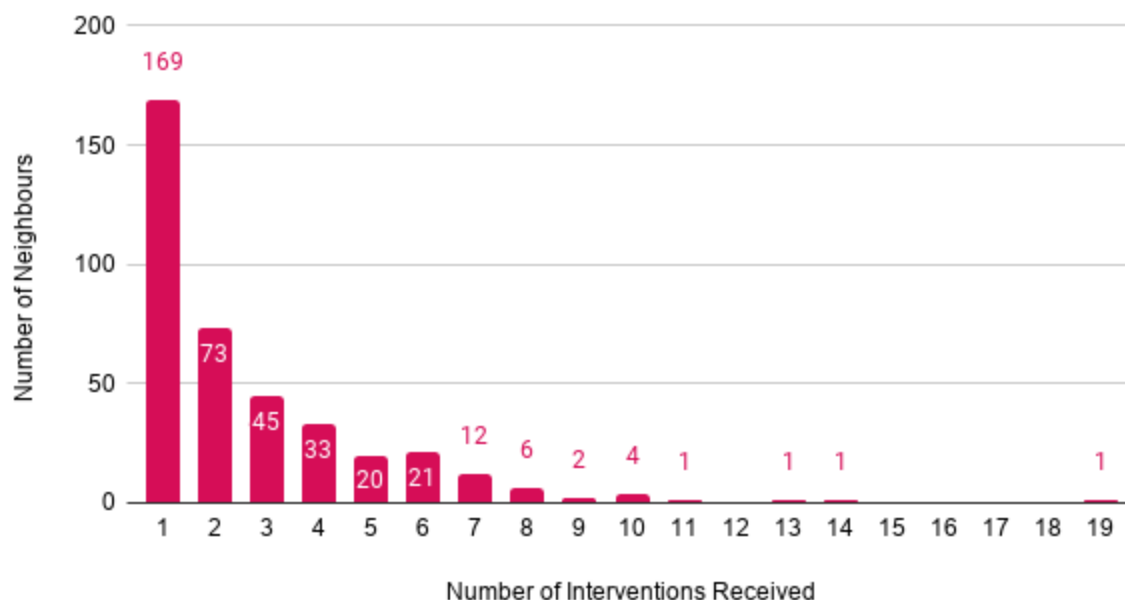
While the majority of this project is carried out with a lightness of touch, it also deals with some complicated situations and challenging realities. This has knock-on effects, all of which should be planned for effectively.

- Austerity and various other measures have left the welfare state in a difficult position. A number of the people we met were not having their basic needs met, and numerous others were only just having these needs met. This is not a new phenomenon, but there is an increasing requirement for individuals to safeguard, particularly when working for community organisations that deal with vulnerability. Applying a person-centred approach means the project will always

work to protect people's safety and wellbeing, but the processes can be time-consuming, and the emotional toll heavy.

- A few of the neighbours we worked with were dealing with difficult circumstances that required a lot of support. For example, being a victim of crime, sudden loss, deteriorating health conditions, and fluctuating financial situations can all lead to the need for comprehensive intervention. As with above, we are happy and eager to provide this support, but these cases take time, energy, and resources. The most complicated situation we dealt with this year required 19 separate interventions and took nearly two full days of work. We made 19 referrals to Adult Social Care, of which five were for safeguarding.
- This work is important and can make a hugely positive difference to someone's wellbeing. However, it is not always right or suitable to speak about it on social media or through other communication channels. As a result, the impact of this work and its importance within the project is not always accurately reflected.

Number of Neighbours vs. Number of Interventions Received



Recommendation: Build some flexibility into the project so complicated circumstances are given the attention they deserve with a minimal knock-on effect. South London Cares' team members should be encouraged to seek external wellbeing support to ensure the mental and emotional impacts do not cause long term distress. Communication that allows for this work to be spoken about should be considered (although always sensitively and with consent).

6.4 Monitoring and evaluation

A recommendation from last year's project was to work more closely with sibling charities in The Cares Family to establish best practice for data collection and reporting using our new CRM software. We didn't have much time during the project to interrogate the data, reflect, and readjust if necessary. This has been done retrospectively and it has proved to be beneficial and insightful.

Quotes and feedback provided by neighbours give us an understanding of the impact of our work. We also intended to complete surveys with 20 neighbours we had supported in each borough. Unfortunately, our emergency response to the Covid-19 pandemic meant we did not have the time or resources to complete these.

Recommendation: Create and plan surveys before the start of the next project and commit time for them to be completed. Continue to work with [Renaissi](#) to create a person-centred approach to our monitoring and evaluation in order to further inform the project's direction. If these surveys can be built into our CRM software, then our monitoring will become ingrained with delivery. Combining that with regular data evaluation should allow for more effective management and impact.

6.5 Network participation

Winter Wellbeing does not currently have the capacity for any neighbours – younger or older – to get involved in shaping delivery. It is the only programme at the charity that is not technically intergenerational, and yet there is scope for both generations to play a part. This would allow for collaborative and user-led work, provide additional opportunities for monitoring and evaluation and lead to independent insight into its strength and challenges.

Recommendation: Trial the participation of older and younger neighbours in the Outreach programme and transfer the successful results into the next project.

6.6 Covid-19 Emergency Response

We suspended our face-to-face programmes from 13th March and moved our resources into our Covid-19 emergency response. This initially involved communicating with and reassuring our network and then moved to the formation and delivery of our new and amended programmes that would allow older and younger people to connect from afar. As a result, some interventions were delayed or unsuccessful, the Winter Wrap-Up event was cancelled, and activities such as the surveys were not completed. A more comprehensive report on our Covid-19 emergency response will be published in due course.

7.0 Conclusions

During this year's project, we spoke to fewer people and attended fewer outreach engagements than last year, but in terms of the support we provided, it was our broadest and deepest project to date. 43% of the people we spoke to took up an offer of support, and 56% of those people received more than one intervention. These figures are both more than double those from last year, which is a considerable increase.

This was achieved as a direct result of following the recommendations made from last year's project. We worked more closely with housing providers, were more selective with the outreach engagements we attended and focused on activities that allowed us to spend more time speaking with individuals or small groups. Effective collaboration combined with a person-centred approach allowed for a deeper insight into people's circumstances and improved our ability to provide support.

We introduced a record number of new neighbours to our network, many of whom came through door-knocking. This activity is a vital tool in meeting those suffering or most at risk from loneliness and, therefore, offers the greatest opportunity to provide support and have a positive impact. **We should continue to work collaboratively with housing providers to pursue further opportunities.**

Paying attention to the journeys that neighbours take within our programmes serves to highlight how we build trust and nurture relationships. Winter Wellbeing is key to that journey and often starts it by handing over a warm item donated by other members of the community. Providing something useful for free without asking anything in return allows neighbours to build an immediate rapport with us. **By then engaging and re-engaging neighbours over time, they develop relationships and share new experiences in a way that can become life-changing.**

Our communications and social media focused on providing a platform to talk about the people we met and the places we visited. **Giving neighbours a voice to share their stories and express their characters enables them to remain visible, develop deeper connections, and foster feelings of togetherness and belonging.**

There are some aspects of this project that are not so easy to talk about. The work deals with some complex, sensitive issues and tough realities. Some relate to individual circumstances, and some to a bigger picture of austerity and societal challenge. **This aspect of the work offers us the opportunity to shed light on the difficult**

situations some people are dealing with, alongside the potential to make lasting change, and we should find ways of talking about it.

Both the data and the stories demonstrate how this project is rooted in community. We made and received greater numbers of referrals from community partners, raised more money on the Big Give campaign, and were donated more items of warm clothing by corporate partners than in previous years. The project, and South London Cares generally, should continue to develop its relationships with individuals, community groups, and partner organisations. **These relationships should, however, always focus on optimising the person-centred approach that holds the wellbeing of every individual at its core.**

Community's involvement is not only the key to the project's reach and success; it is the reason it exists at all. It is also the community that holds its future. Winter Wellbeing is ingrained in the people and places of Southwark and Lambeth, and if it is going to continue developing in both breadth and depth, then it should proactively involve these people and places in its delivery.

For numerous reasons – many of which are political and societal in nature and some of which are now revealed or deepened by the Covid-19 pandemic – the need and desire for support is only likely to grow in the coming years. The project was over-capacity this year and so to be able to cope with these increases, it makes sense to look to those already invested in its success. **By involving neighbours and the current network in the delivery, it will enable the project to continue reaching more people in more ways. Proactively seeking feedback from those involved will also help to shape the project in a way that most accurately reflects its purpose.**

Relationships are the key. Through kindness and community, we can help to ensure the older neighbours of Southwark and Lambeth have the relationships they need to not only stay warm, active, and connected, but to thrive.

8.0 Appendices

Appendix A – Community partners we received referrals from

Listed by number of referrals made (number of referrals shown in brackets).

Organisations: [British Red Cross](#) (44), [Age UK Lambeth](#) (10), [Guys Hospital - Older Persons Assessment Unit](#) (10), [Age UK Lewisham and Southwark](#) (7), [Guys and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust](#) (6), [Time & Talents](#) (5), [Kings College Hospital](#) (4), [Mawbey GP Group Practice](#) (4), [Lambeth Adult Social Care](#) (3), [Link Age Southwark](#) (2), Rosemanor-Hopton Care Home (2), [Silverfit Wellbeing Service](#) (2) [South London & Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust](#) (2), [St Thomas' Hospital - Acute Older Person's Unit](#) (2), [Healthwatch Lambeth](#) (1), [Home Instead](#) (1), [Lambeth Talking Therapies](#) (1), [Repowering London](#) (1), [Southwark Adult Social Care](#) (1), [Talking Therapies Southwark](#) (1).

Individuals: Family members (5), Neighbour (4), Friend (2).

Appendix B – Community partners we made referrals to

Listed by type and number of referrals (number of referrals shown in brackets)

Cold homes (57)	SHINE (30), Repowering London (27)
Social connections (50)	Re-Engage (9), North London Cares (7), Blackfriars Settlement (4), Watmos Housing (3), GoodGym (3), Black Prince Trust (3), Time & Talents (2), Southwark Pensioners Centre (2), The Silver Line (2), People's Care Association (2), Macmillan Cancer Support (2), Link Age Southwark (2), Wimbledon Guild (1), St Johns Senior Citizen Partnership (1), St George the Martyr Charity (1), Southwark Irish Pensioners (1), Opening Doors London (1), Mosaic Clubhouse (1), London Borough of Lambeth Libraries (1), Clapham Park Project (1), BUPA Stockwell and Clapham (1)
Age UK (43)	Age UK Lambeth (32), Age UK Lewisham and Southwark (8), Age UK Croydon (1), Age UK Hounslow (1), Age UK London (1)
Housing (29)	Hyde Housing (19), Watmos (4), Lambeth Council (2), Southwark Council (1), L&Q Housing (1), Centre 70 (1), Brixton Advice Centre (1)
Mental health (20)	The Silver Line (7), CRUSE Bereavement Care Lambeth (5), Lambeth Talking Therapies (3), Alzheimers Society (1), Healthwatch Lambeth (1), Mosaic Clubhouse (1), Samaritans (1), Southwark Talking Therapies (1)
Adult Social Care (19)	Lambeth Adult Social Care (13), Southwark Adult Social Care (6)
Financial (16)	Centre 70 (5), Citizens Advice Merton and Lambeth (4), Citizens Advice Southwark (2), Action Fraud (1), Beacon Continuing Healthcare (1), Macmillan Cancer Support (1), Think Jessica (1), Victim Support (1)
Health services (14)	Alzheimer's Society (4), Macmillan Cancer Support (2), British Red Cross (1), British Red Cross - Guys and St

	Thomas' Hospital (1), British Red Cross - Kings College Hospital (1), Knights Hill GP Surgery (1), NHS (1), Self-Management UK (1), Thomas Pocklington Trust (1), Vision Foundation (1)
Food support (13)	Lambeth Larder (4), Brixton and Norwood Foodbank (4), Be Enriched Castle Canteen (1), Food 2 You (1), Peckham Pantry (1), Spires (1), Southwark Foodbank (1)
Practical support (12)	GoodGym (4), Southwark Carers (2), Alzheimer's Society (2), Lambeth Carers Hub (2), Southwark Pensioners Centre (1), TRAID (1)
Leisure activities (9)	Listening Books (3), Coin Street (2), Silverfit Wellbeing Service (2), Bermondsey Uprising (1), Black Prince Trust (1)
Transport (7)	TFL (7)
Tech support (5)	Ability Net (3), RNIB (1), Upper Norwood Library (1)
Other grants (4)	Camberwell Consolidated Charities (1), Elizabeth Finn Fund (1), St George The Martyr Charity (1), Turn 2 Us (1)
Other (4)	Citizens Advice Southwark (1), East Street Market (1), Met Police (1), London Care (1)
Broken boiler (1)	Hyde Housing (1)