



Community Connections

Annual Report

April 2016 – March 2017



Introduction

The Community Connections project is a preventative community development programme linking the NHS, Lewisham Council, voluntary and community services providing ease of access and sustainable support to improve the health, wellbeing and quality of life of Lewisham adults.

Funded by Lewisham Council and the Better Care Fund,, and delivered through a consortium of six local charities, the project has successfully been running since 2013 and provides new routes for vulnerable adults (18+) needing social care support to access local community provision and become proactive and empowered to finding sustainable community based solutions to meet their individual needs.

Organisational connections across the borough have been developed over the years to ensure referral routes; information sharing and combined comprehensive support can be established and maintained. This work has been led by the projects own Community Development Workers who have developed intelligence on Lewisham services. The information they gather has been shared across the borough and at the newly formed Neighbourhood Connection Groups, created to engage and promote effective joint working, information exchange and planning ensuring that people accessing health and social care services are connected to community services providing greater individual choice.

Alongside, Community Facilitators, have and, continue to identify and encourage individuals to access community based support and decrease social isolation through short-term one-to-one person centred support.

We are pleased to present to you the work undertaken and the key achievements of Community Connections from April 2016 to March 2017.

**Community Development Workers
(CDWs) use individualised
development plans to support groups,
organisations and individuals**

- ✓ Carry out developments to their services
- ✓ Training and guidance
- ✓ Set up a new group or service
- ✓ Support fundraising
- ✓ Build capacity

A member-led peer support group of contributors who teach, inspire, facilitate and participate in the band. Members shape the format of group sessions and encourage each other.

Community Connections started working with group founder Pauline Durkin in April 2016. The first session took place in June 2016 and the sessions have been weekly ever since.

**Helping start up
a new group:
'Feel the Noise'**

**Come On Feel The
Noise!**

**A Fun Music Group for adults
with Visual Impairments**



Every Thursday, 1pm – 3pm at Seniors
260 Stanstead Road, SE23 1DD

For more information contact Pauline:
07594068684 or
Seniors on 020 8291 1164

'Feeling the Noise' is the name of the band which has grown out of this group.

They recently performed at the annual BlindAid Party!

Community Development Workers also work at a Community-Wide Level



- Building networks and links
- Collecting intelligence about borough-wide service gaps
- Participating in a range of community-based forums
- Attending and facilitating events such as ward assemblies and Health Watch consultations

Linking Lives:

Community Connections identified a borough-wide gap in befriending services. CDWs set up a network of 4 groups interested in addressing this gap and together they joined Linking Lives, a national initiative building befriending services in local communities. Now there are new one-to-one and group befriending options for Lewisham residents!

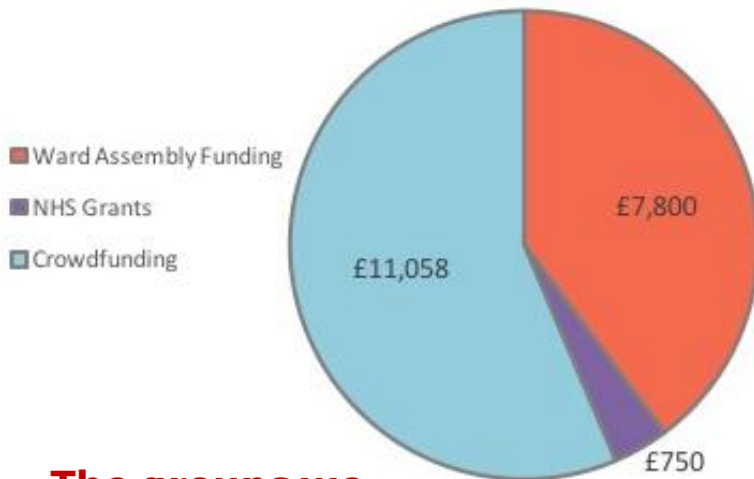
Faith groups are a key resource delivering effective community action. One of our CDWs helped facilitate the **first ever Downham Faith Gathering** bringing together leaders from Muslim, Roman Catholic and Anglican communities. Additionally, Downham & Whitefoot ward Councillors, local residents and key officers from the London Borough of Lewisham were in attendance.



Community Development Workers (CDWs) successfully supported ten organisations to apply for funding this year.

The CDWs' support ranged from helping evidence need or measuring the impact of current services, to proofreading and supporting around English language skills. This year CDWs also supported organisations around crowdfunding, as more and more funds are available online as match grants, i.e. if an organisation crowdfunds a certain amount, a grant tied to that crowdfunding platform may match the funding to an extent.

Supported Fundraising



The groups we supported raised £19,608, an average of almost £2000 per organisation

Reasons why organisations need fundraising support:

Some of the groups we work with support specific ethnic communities and may need help with 'academic' English-language writing for bids.

Other groups may lack the capacity to find studies demonstrating the need for their proposed project.

Some groups may not know what funding opportunities are currently open and need support knowing what is available.

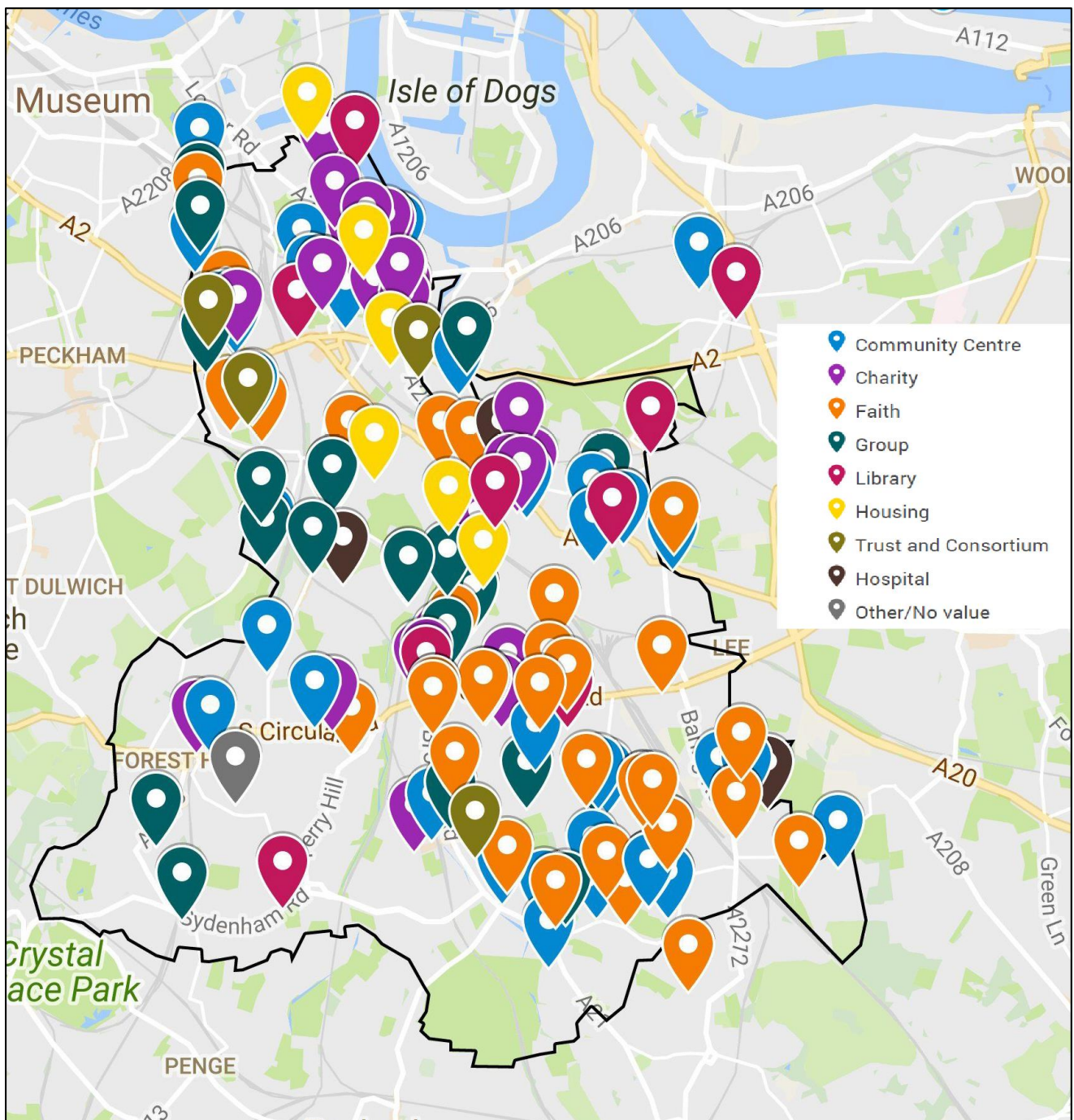
Supported Crowdfunding:

One CDW worked with an organisation which provides skills training to vulnerable people, for example towards a career in catering or construction. The group was interested in **crowdfunding** for a celebration of the students' success across the year, but they were unsure where to start or how to run a crowdfunding campaign.

The CDW supported them to **research** and compare different crowdfunding platform websites, fees and match funds available.

Once a platform was chosen, the CDW helped the organisation **plan** out and launch an eight-week crowdfunding campaign. The organisation was able to tie into six match funds and **raised £8925!**

Organisations in Lewisham



Community Development Workers have built up intelligence about the organisations, groups and services in Lewisham as well as working with the Community Facilitators to identify gaps in services available to vulnerable adults in Lewisham.

Techy Tea Parties

Digital exclusion is a growing challenge for older people. Our CDWs are promoting digital inclusion through a series of 'Techy Tea Party' Pop Ups across Lewisham: older people can gather in a friendly environment to build digital skills with volunteers.

2014-2016: Building contacts and partnerships

Community Connections began talking with Age UK London in July 2014 about their digital inclusion project with EE Telecommunications .



On 9th September 2014 one of our CDWs, a Community Connections client Norah, and Muriel, the chair of the Ageing Well Fun Club in New Cross all attended a Techy Tea Party in the House of Commons. Muriel learnt some new skills on a laptop and Norah learnt how to take video recordings with her digital camera.

Our CDW began looking for partners and building relationships with other groups interested in Techy Tea Parties. With the support of the Rushey Green Time Bank and Lewisham Pensioners Forum, we threw our first Techy Tea Party in Crofton Park library. **The party was a huge success**, with 40 older people and 11 volunteer 'Techy Helpers'.



During 2015-2016 one of our CDWs worked with My Complete Focus, an organisation helping vulnerable adults learn IT skills. CC supported them to apply for funding from the Positive Ageing Council. My Complete Focus used the grant money to purchase Mi-Fi equipment, enabling My Complete Focus, Lewisham Pensioners Forum and Community Connections to begin delivering regular Techy Tea Parties.

2016-2017: GoON Lewisham – Techy Tea Party Pop Ups

This year all 4 of our CDWs have been working with My Complete Focus and Cat Bytes, funded by Age UK London as part of the GoON Lewisham initiative. We delivered over 30 Techy Tea Party Pop Ups in a wide range of locations including community centres, churches and in community groups. These pop ups were made possible by a wonderful team of volunteers, collectively donating **295 hours** of their time.

This year we supported **422 learners**, helping older people become more confident and independent using technology and the internet.

On 22nd February 2017 at the GoON Lewisham celebratory Techy Tea Party we were proud to be awarded **a Partnership Award** for the work we have been doing to support digital inclusion of older people.



Joyce had a stroke several years ago and wrote a book about how it changed her life and what helped her regain her health. She is keen to get online and promote her book online, but she had some questions about how social media could help her.

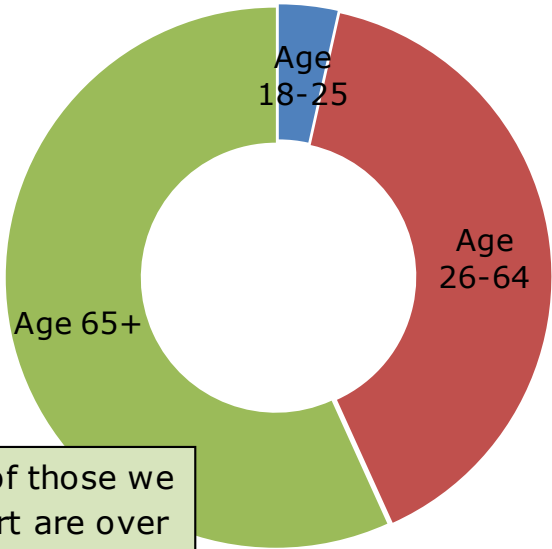
With a techy helper, Joyce learned more about facebook and twitter. She learned the difference between “twitter followers” and the people you follow on twitter. She learned what a facebook timeline is, how to write on someone’s facebook wall, how to use ‘likes’ and ‘emojis’ and how to leave comments. Joyce also learned about uploading photos and videos into her facebook and twitter posts.

Joyce’s long-term aim is to use social media to promote worldwide awareness of strokes. She was keen to look at how various charities use social media, such as the Stroke Association and Community Connections. She says, “If I need to learn the business aspect of facebook I will – It’s worldwide!”

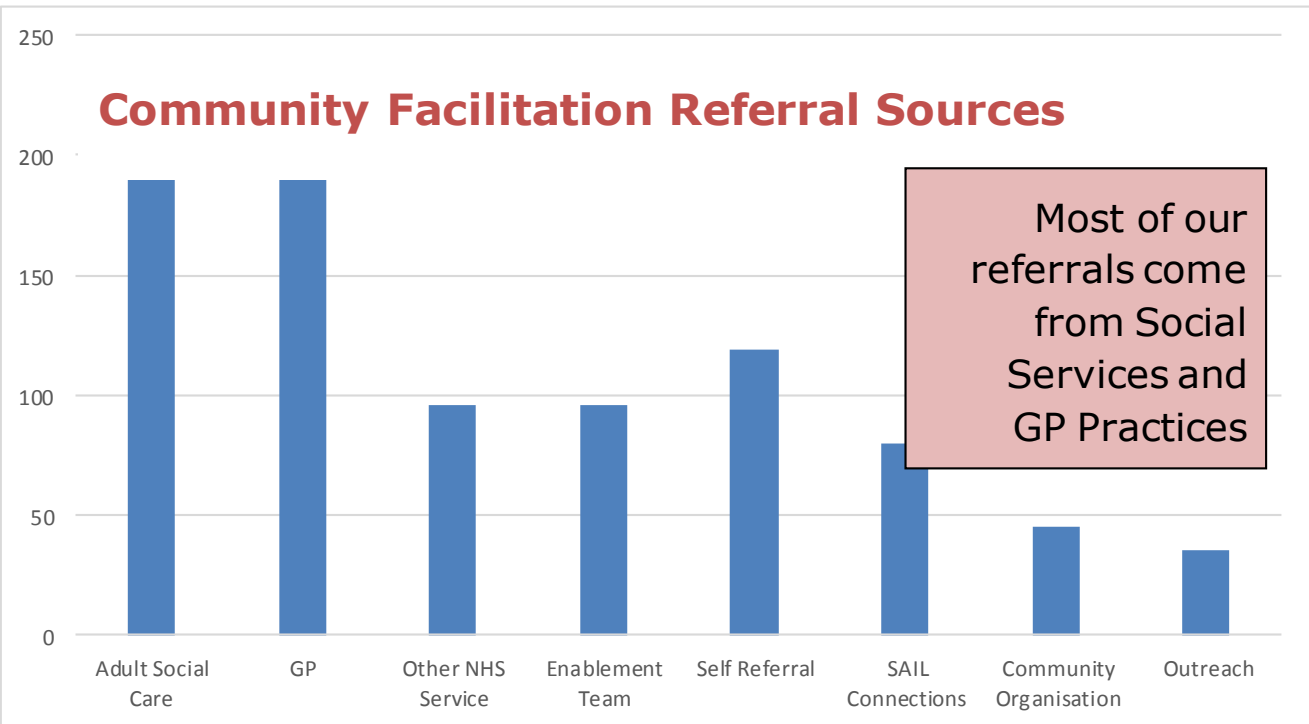
Community Facilitation

Community Facilitators:
Our Community Facilitators support adults in Lewisham to become more socially engaged and to improve their mental wellbeing. We use a person-centred approach based around the 5 Ways to Wellbeing model.

Social isolation and poor mental wellbeing affect people of all ages.



57% of those we support are over 65 years old.



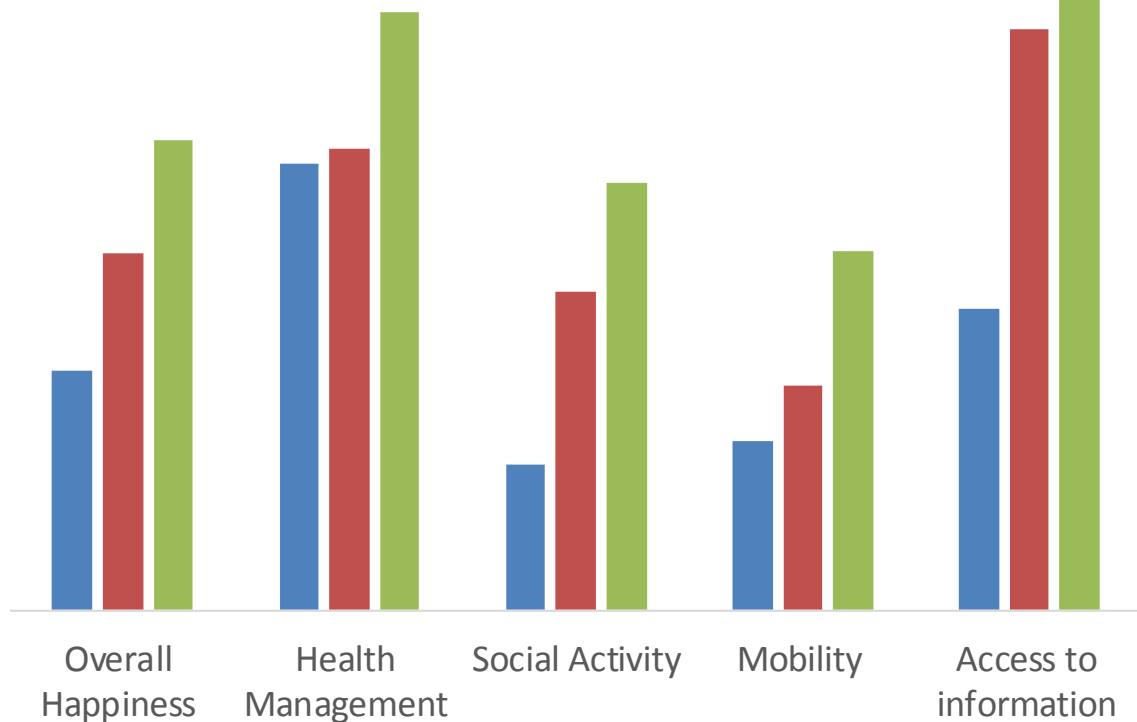
Most of our referrals come from Social Services and GP Practices

We ask all our clients to answer 5 simple questions about mental wellbeing about the beginning and end of our work with them. Many of the people we work with have complex and deteriorating health conditions. Despite this 68% of our clients report an increase in Mental Wellbeing after working with a Community Facilitator.

From the sample of clients we follow up again three months later. We can see the improvements in mental wellbeing are lasting and in many cases the benefits continue to increase.

Self reported wellbeing

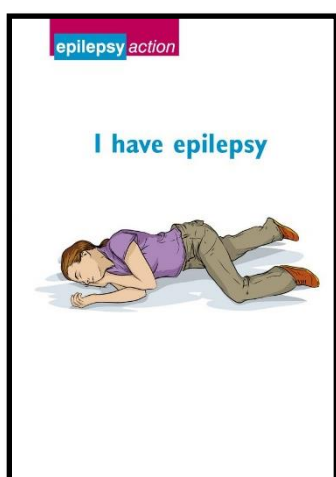
■ Baseline ■ Case Closed ■ 3 month follow up



Social Isolation affects people of all ages: Jay*'s story

Jay is a 38 year-old man who developed epilepsy as an adult. He has a hard time controlling his seizures, and as a result he was afraid to leave his house for fear of having a seizure and not having help available.

A Community Facilitator (CF) met with Jay in his home to talk about his situation - his likes and dislikes, his interests and what holds him back from engaging in community life.



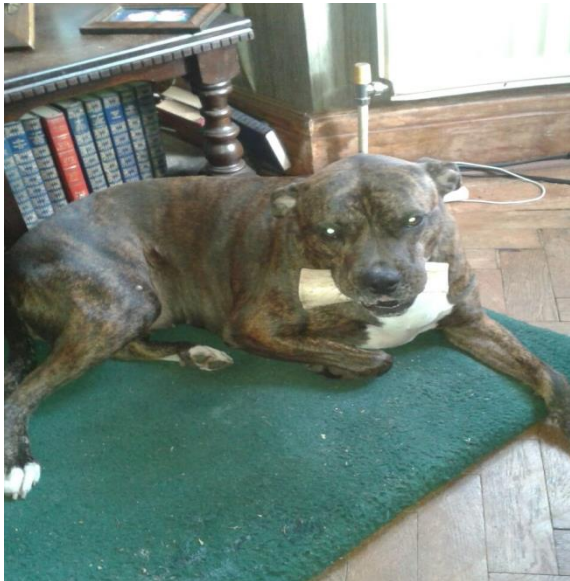
Jay said that he would like to get back into work again, but the first step for him would be to build confidence in leaving the house. The CF helped Jay to get an epilepsy card through Epilepsy Action, which Jay can carry in case someone finds him having a seizure.

The CF also suggested a nearby befriending group and helped Jay work out a safety plan with them: he will call the group to let them know he is coming, and if he does not arrive within an hour they group knows to notify the authorities that he has had difficulty along the way.

Having a safety plan helped Jay feel more confident in leaving the house. He asked about community gardening groups, and is now talking to Voluntary Services Lewisham about volunteering with them as well. Often the first step is the hardest, as Jay found.

*Jay's name has been changed

Deborah's Story



Deborah has become housebound due to bad health but still wants to keep her dog. She was suffering terrible guilt because illness meant her being unable to give Lucy all she required. A Community Facilitator referred Deborah to Cinnamon Trust who provides volunteer dog walkers in her area. A volunteer was assigned to her and Lucy now gets daily walks to different parks. Lucy gets excited when the volunteer arrives due to the strong bond that the volunteer has created with her and Deborah is much happier knowing her Canine Companions needs are being met!

Hearing from a Community Connections volunteer:



I've been volunteering with Community Connections for a year now. I'm enjoying it, because it breaks up my week and gets me away from my desk job. It feels good to give a little bit of my time and attention to somebody who really appreciates it - it may be a small thing, but it can make a big difference.

I enjoy meeting people, and through volunteering I have gotten to know some lovely and inspiring people I would otherwise not have met. I love a good conversation, and I've had so many interesting and entertaining conversations with the people I've met.

I'm used to working in a target-driven job. It feels good to balance that and support someone, just being there for them, from one person to another.

The Community Connections team look after us volunteers and are there to guide and advise, which is really helpful.

Tino Kulnik

Community Connector

Partners with Lewisham's Community

Partnership working is key to the work we do in Lewisham and the support we provide to vulnerable adults in the community. Community Connections is a project embedded in the community, supporting the development of a caring community.

Rushey Green Time Bank planned a Day Out to Kew Gardens for the orchid show.

Free tickets were provided to all time bank members, including some Community Connections clients, and it promised to be a beautiful adventure!

A dozen CC clients and several staff joined the time-bankers for a memorable trip out of Lewisham.



Baring Road Hotel Christmas Lunch:

We asked Baring Road Hotel pub to help provide a free Christmas meal for some of the vulnerable adults in their community. They generously agreed to host 20 vulnerable adults for a three course meal!

We held our team Christmas meal at the same time and the festive afternoon had a true atmosphere of community spirit.