



# Strategic Plan

## 2023-2025





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# Foreword

This document sets out the strategic objectives for Age UK Lewisham and Southwark for the period 2023-2025. It is the culmination of discussions with trustees, staff and other stakeholders and builds on our previous strategic plan. The document restates our Vision, Mission and Aims and describes why these are relevant and important - as well as outlining how we will do our best to ensure that we deliver on these aspirations and goals.

The document also briefly describes our current work – as well as reflecting on the many changes that we made in the face of the Covid19 pandemic which hugely affected the older people that we exist to support. The document outlines the operating context in which we are working, which includes the current volatile political and economic situation as well as the demographic changes that are impacting our communities in Lewisham and Southwark.

A key purpose of this document is to guide our work through the uncertain future by ensuring that everything we do contributes to our Vision and Mission and we will require that every key decision we make has links to one of our key Strategic Aims as outlined in this document. This strategic plan aims to help us accept uncertainty as a norm whilst having the confidence to chart a longer-term direction without losing sight of our Vision and Mission. We hope that others might find this document useful – and are always open to contributions to our strategic thinking (and to our fundraising targets!)

Regards



Ross Diamond  
CEO



John Veness  
Chair of the Trustees

# Age UK Lewisham and Southwark

## **Our Purpose and Vision:**

To improve the lives of older people in the London Boroughs of Lewisham and Southwark, working towards a future in which older people are valued, safe and empowered to make choices about their lives

## **Our Mission:**

Age UK Lewisham and Southwark aims to empower and enable older people to lead fulfilled lives by:

- Providing services and support that address poverty and isolation
- Protecting the human rights of local older people
- Promoting health and wellbeing
- Connecting older people with their communities
- Working positively with partners across all sectors

## **Our Values:**

Our work is shaped by our values:

- We recognise older people as individuals with diverse talents and needs
- We are fair and equal as a service provider, employer and partner
- We are opposed to ageism and discrimination in all forms
- We are collaborative in our approach to work
- We are a dynamic, credible, trusted and sustainable organisation

## **Our Strategic Aims:**

Our overall aims and values are reflected in our current strategic aims:

- To deliver services that people want and need
- To proactively identify and respond to local needs
- To maintain and increase the resilience of Age UK Lewisham and Southwark

Age UK Lewisham and Southwark is an independent registered charity.  
Head Office: Stones End Day Centre, 11 Scovell Road, London, SE1 1QQ.  
Registered Charity number 296862. Company number 02118525

# What We Do

The older people that we support are all different – and the variety of services that we offer shows how we try to reflect this in our work. Much of our work focuses on vulnerable older people who are looking to reduce social isolation and remain engaged with their local communities. We try to enable them to give as well as receive support whenever possible.

Our Information and Advice Services provide free, confidential and non-judgemental advice on areas including money, housing, and community care options. We support people in completing a wide array of tasks, from online banking and benefit applications to emergency heating, home repairs or even moving house. Much of our focus in the years to come is likely to be supporting older people to stay warm and fed by ensuring that everyone is receiving all the pensions and benefits to which they are entitled and can access local support groups and services.



Our provision of *social prescription*-type services in Lewisham (via Community Connections) and in Southwark (via Ageing Well Southwark) enables us to provide referrals and one to one support to thousands of vulnerable adults every year. Social Prescribing helps people to find and access the range of local support that can help them prevent or delay the development of long-term health conditions, to remain independent and be able to contribute to their local communities for as long as possible. Social prescribing recognises that people’s health and wellbeing are determined mostly by a range of social, economic and environmental factors, and seeks to address people’s needs in a holistic way. It also aims to support individuals to take greater control of their own health and wellbeing. The Ageing Well project, which is commissioned by Southwark Council, also enables us and our “COPSINS” partner charities to deliver a range of services including befriending and tailored support for carers. Our Community Connections work in Lewisham also enables us to provide Community Development and practical Fundraising support to community groups and charities to help them grow and thrive.

We provide a range of practical support to older people through our Handy Person, Happy Feet and Food 2 You shopping services as well as a volunteer-led visiting service to Southwark’s older peoples care homes.



Our Healthy Living and Learning Services provide space for older people to come together, join activities and make friends at our Healthy Living Centre and across Southwark, including via our “MySocial Southwark” project. We run a wide range of activities including computer classes, cookery clubs, yoga and seated exercise sessions. We also support the growth and establishment of user-led community groups and activities across Southwark.



At the Stones End Day Care Centre, we provide a welcoming social space for older people needing higher levels of care, including as a result of dementia.

Through day care and other services, we also support and relieve the pressure on carers.

In 2022 we took over the befriending and transport services formally offered by Voluntary Services Lewisham (which had decided to close). This enables us to deliver even more support to vulnerable older people in Lewisham.



We pride ourselves on being close to the communities that we serve and quick to respond to their needs. During the Covid crisis we quickly restructured all our services and were able to provide a wide range of new services, including the delivery of over 20,000 freshly cooked meals. The current concerns about the impact of inflation and the rising cost of living on older people in our boroughs means that we will, again, be prepared to review our resources, services and ways of working to provide the best possible support.

# Our Operating Context – *volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity...*

When we drafted our 2019-2022 Strategic Plan we had no idea of how much the world would have changed in the time-period covered by the document. The Covid19 pandemic in particular had huge impact on older people in Lewisham and Southwark, as well as on the lives of everyone across the globe.

We are proud of how we responded to the challenges of Covid19, and whilst the pandemic remains very much with us, it is important to reflect on and review our key functions and prospects for future development. This will help us remain a strong, sustainable and credible charity, providing important services to meet the current and future needs of older people and to amplify their voices and influence to help shape a better future for older people in Lewisham and Southwark.

Our values-led approach to working with older people and in positive partnership with a range of other organisations and our local communities, meant that we were able to quickly adapt our services to meet the new needs that faced older people at each stage of the pandemic – from the first lockdowns to the vaccine roll outs and beyond. It is this approach that gives us confidence that we will be able to face the challenges of the future – which we know will be many-faceted, unpredictable and testing.

During the first phases of the pandemic in Southwark we temporarily closed both our day centres but kept the staff working to engage with our members and other vulnerable older people in Southwark. We delivered over 20,000 freshly cooked meals and distributed smart-phones with data and simple instructions to help people get online at a time when it was so vital to stay connected during the lockdowns.

During the first phases of the pandemic in Lewisham we restructured our Community Connections Lewisham (social prescribing service) to provide a 7 day per week phone line from April to June 2020 and 5 days per week in July and August for Lewisham residents in need of practical help such as shopping and collecting prescriptions as well as helping people access foodbanks, befriending, etc. During the six months of the hub, our Lewisham team supported 6,283 adults and 3,071 children. They handled 12,000 phone calls, delivered 11,187 food parcels and matched 1,166 isolated adults with 448 volunteer befrienders.

Many of our other services – notably our Ageing Well Southwark and our Information and Advice services - quickly adapted to working remotely and proactively, reaching out to vulnerable older people (as well as finding ways that we could engage directly with them, sometimes by talking to them from outside their homes whilst they stood on their doorsteps).

The lessons learned from the pandemic – and the positive partnerships we have developed with other local charities and community groups, Council and NHS colleagues, funders and the communities that we serve – will provide us with an excellent baseline from which to develop adaptive and focused services in the years to come.

In the face of the unprecedented cost of living crisis, with huge increases in utility bills and wider inflationary pressures, we know that we will need to support vulnerable older people in a range of new ways against a backdrop of increasing challenges on our own resources. We will do everything we can to increase and diversify our income streams; work hard to mitigate risks arising from the challenging context in which we operate; ensure our internal systems and structures are fit for purpose; and work harder to improve our external communications, notably in relation to sharing information about the positive impact of our work. At the time of writing – in the autumn of 2022, we are preparing to support vulnerable people in our boroughs to cope with the winter to come, with many people fearful of being able to heat their homes sufficiently whilst also being able to buy and prepare healthy food: a

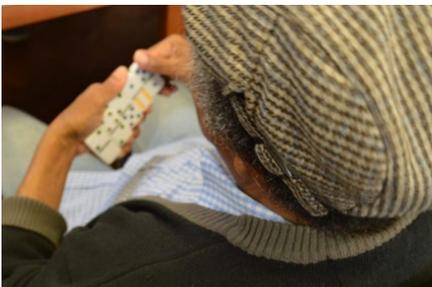
situation that shames a capital city in one of the wealthiest countries on the planet.

As our population grows older, so the number of people living with long-term conditions including dementia, older people at risk of having falls that limit their physical abilities and their confidence, and the numbers of older people experiencing social isolation and mental distress will also grow. We are also beginning to see increasing levels of anxiety in relation to the cost of living crisis. It is hugely important, therefore, that we find ways to support this expanding cohort of older people.

Our relationships with older people and carers, our voluntary and public sector partners and funders are strong – though we expect funding to become ever-more difficult to secure and budgets to become increasingly tight. Our reputation and the awareness of our “Age UK” brand is also a strength and it is important that we build on this trust and recognition to raise the voices of older people and their carers.

**Key actions to help Age UK Lewisham and Southwark thrive in the years to come will include:**

- ensuring that we have a strong Board of Trustees (with a good mix of experienced and newer Trustees that reflect the diversity of the communities that we serve);
- establishing an all-age subsidiary charity to enable us to support more older people via delivering contracts that support older people *and* other vulnerable adults;
- enhancing our fundraising capacity and broadening our funding base;
- developing new impact reporting and communications plans;
- ensuring that our financial monitoring and reporting is accurate, robust and timely;
- ensuring that we can confidently hear and amplify the voices of older people that we work with;
- making good use of our reserves (which have been prudently managed to ensure we have funds for the proverbial ‘rainy day’ that we are now in the midst of); and
- continuing to ensure that our governing documents, procedures and policies are fit for purpose.



# Lewisham: A Story in Numbers



In 2020 the total **population** of Lewisham was 305,309. Lewisham is a relatively 'young borough' with lower than average numbers of older people for a borough of this size. Lewisham is the 14th largest London borough by population size and is a **highly diverse** borough - home to residents with more than 75 nationalities with over 170 languages spoken by Lewisham school pupils. Residents whose first language is not English are concentrated in the north of the borough as well as Lewisham Central ward.

Lewisham is the 7th most deprived borough (excluding the City) in London (DHULC 2019) and was 11<sup>th</sup> in the ranking of London boroughs for **Deprivation Affecting Older People** in 2019. 18.2% of households in Lewisham are in fuel poverty according to the Government's latest figures. Lewisham is densely populated and has the 6th highest rate of household overcrowding in London. Nearly 10% of households in the borough are classed as overcrowded.



Women in Lewisham have a higher **life expectancy** than the national average whereas, for male residents, life expectancy is significantly lower than the national average (and is the 3rd lowest in London). There are also significant variations in life expectancy found in the different parts of the borough: men in Crofton Park ward can expect to live for 6 years longer than those in New Cross ward, and women in Perry Vale ward can be expected to live 8.5 years more than women in New Cross ward.

Lewisham has a lower rate of many **Long-Term Conditions** than England as a whole, however the younger age structure of the local population is a notable contributing factor in that figure. **Average health status score** for adults aged 65+ is lower than London and England (GP Patient Survey, 2016/17). 4.0% of Lewisham residents aged 65+ received reablement services after hospital discharge - higher than the London and national average.

Lewisham has high - and increasing - numbers of people with frailty and a higher than average number of attendances at the hospital **Emergency Department**, and of **hospital admissions**, compared to London and England as a whole.

The number of patients on the Lewisham GP Practice **Dementia** Register has increased year on year since 2007 with 4.49% of GP patients aged 65+ being recorded as having dementia.



Whilst the GP-recorded prevalence of depression is lower than the rate for England as a whole, by contrast, there are significantly higher rates of serious mental illness in Lewisham (1.3%) compared to England (0.9%) as a whole.



The 2011 census counted 8.1% of Lewisham residents as being **carers** who provide at least some unpaid care each week. Only 36.6% of adult carers in Lewisham have as much social contact as they would like.

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## Southwark: A Story in Numbers



Home to 320,000 people, Southwark is the 11<sup>th</sup> largest London borough, by **population**. Compared to other boroughs and England as a whole, Southwark has a young population – with the average age being almost two years younger than London’s average and almost seven years younger than the national average.

Southwark is a **highly diverse** borough, with over 120 languages spoken locally, and over 1 in 10 households having no members who speak English as a first language.

Dept for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities data from 2019 puts Southwark 6<sup>th</sup> in the rankings for London boroughs for **Deprivation**

**Affecting Older People.** Southwark has seen an improvement in its ranking relative to other local authorities since 2015, yet remains one of the most deprived in the country.

Both men and women in the borough now live longer than the national average but whilst **life expectancy** in Southwark is increasing, this improvement has not been the same across the borough. Overall levels of life expectancy remain lowest in communities with higher levels of socio-economic deprivation such as Peckham and highest in our more affluent communities, such as Dulwich.



Over 40% of Southwark’s Pensioners **live alone** – around 10% higher than the national average and around 5% higher than the London average. While the older population is smaller than many other boroughs, this group is growing as people are living longer. One of the reasons suggested for this is that families cannot afford to remain in the borough because of high costs of housing, leaving older residents behind. 8.8% of Southwark residents report often feeling lonely (the London average is 7.9%), something that tends to disproportionately affect older residents.

The number of people experiencing multiple **long-term health conditions** is expected to increase by 30% over the next 10 years. People living in the most deprived areas of the country can expect to develop two or more long-term conditions up to 10 years earlier than those living in the most affluent communities. In 2020/21 Southwark Adult Social Care received 5,145 new requests for support, compared to 4,760 in 2019/20. Rates of requests for support in the borough are below regional and national levels among both



working age adults and older people. Adult Social Care provided support to 3,456 long-term service users in 2020/21. The most common primary support reason was physical support (59%), with the majority of these service users requiring help with personal care.



**Falls** are the largest cause of **emergency hospital admissions** among older people and can significantly affect longer term outcomes. Emergency hospital admissions for injuries due to falls in older people in Southwark are consistently above national and regional levels. Latest figures show there were 615 admissions in Southwark in 2019/20, with the borough consistently having the highest admission rate in South East London. Admission rates also increase significantly with age, mirroring the national pattern. Rates among those aged 80 and over are more than four times those under 80.

Figures for 2020 show 1,178 people in Southwark aged 65 or over have been diagnosed with **dementia**, and this recorded prevalence (4.0%) is comparable to both London (4.2%) and England (4.0%). However, in 2019/20 there were over 1,620 emergency hospital admissions by Southwark residents with a diagnosis of dementia. The borough has the highest rate of emergency hospital admission for dementia in the capital with rates significantly above both London and England.

We await with interest - and some trepidation - the outcome of research into the **mental wellbeing** of older people following the pandemic lockdowns and the current cost of living crisis.

At the start of 2020 Southwark was thought to have at least 25,700 unpaid **carers**, with numbers expected to increase further in the future – with the increased demand for care since the emergence of Covid19 disproportionately affecting women, people from Black African ethnic backgrounds, and those who themselves live with disability and complex care needs.

# Our Strategic Aims

In order to help us to achieve our Purpose and Vision, *“To improve the lives of older people in the London Boroughs of Lewisham and Southwark, working towards a future in which older people are valued, safe and empowered to make choices about their lives”*, we have adopted a set of key strategic aims. These build on our organisational purpose and values, and are:

1. **To deliver services that people want and need**
2. **To proactively identify and respond to local need**
3. **To maintain and increase the resilience of Age UK Lewisham and Southwark**

## 1. To deliver services that people want and need

**We will provide high-quality services that listen and respond to the people who use them**

### **Actions:**

- We will create a range of opportunities for service users to tell us about the services they receive
- We will actively seek out the thoughts and opinions of service users
- Our services will be flexible and responsive to feedback
- We will continue to develop ways to measure the impact of our work
- We will provide training for staff and volunteers to ensure they are well- equipped to address support needs and able to fulfil their roles
- We will monitor our services through operational and work planning and reporting
- We will meet and endeavour to exceed all agreed targets and outcomes which we are expected and contracted to deliver through funders and quality standards
- **How we will monitor and measure this:**
- Each service will have mechanisms for measuring client satisfaction and targets for positive feedback on services, to be reviewed quarterly
- We will maintain a robust complaints policy, track comments and complaints, and review these quarterly
- Services will develop annual operational plans in response to the feedback from the previous year
- Operational plans will include both short-term and long-term goals which are reviewed annually
- Each service will ensure staff and volunteers are appropriately trained and developed
- Operational plans will be reviewed quarterly and submitted to trustees for oversight
- Work plans will be reviewed quarterly and reviewed by service managers

- A range of appropriate and externally-validated quality standards will be maintained
- Training and supervision records will be saved to our HR system and reviewed to make sure they are properly taking place

## 2. To proactively identify and respond to local need

**We will provide services that are up to date and relevant to the local area, responding to data as well as demand**

### **Actions:**

- We will work closely with statutory bodies to keep informed of changes in the local population
- We will maintain a presence at a strategic level, staying on top of shifting statutory and voluntary-sector provision and aware of gaps
- We will use data sources to inform our understanding of older people's lives and the opportunities – and barriers – that they face in feeling valued, safe and empowered to make choices about their lives
- We will work with a range of other local groups to seek the views and needs of older people and their carers
- We will be open to collaboration across all sectors to enhance and develop our services
- We will work in partnership with local voluntary sector partners (including infrastructure services) and relevant campaigning organisations across the wider voluntary sector
- We will seek and respond to opportunities to raise the voices of older people and their carers in relation to specific services as well as general policy debates where we will seek to use our scale and scope to influence decision-makers at all levels
- We will develop new services as relevant – including looking to maximise the use of our resources (such as our day centre premises) to help older people manage in the face of the inflationary economy
- We will provide pathways for staff and volunteers to grow and develop, ensuring that we are invested in our own services
- We will support communities to engage with older people
- We will support older people to engage with digital technology – as well as supporting digital technology providers to engage with older people
- We will help older people to have non-digital access to services

**How we will monitor and measure this:**

- We will record partnership work with statutory bodies and review key partnerships annually
- Through quarterly work plans, services will record strategic board attendances and key collaborations that they are working in partnership with
- We will track partnerships and growth in joint working and review key partnerships annually
- We will report on our engagement with key partners in CVS and local campaigning work and review partnerships annually
- We will report quarterly to the trustees on the development of all new services

**3. To maintain and increase the resilience of Age UK Lewisham and Southwark**

**We will use governance, financial opportunities and organisational development as tools to build resilience in and across AUKLS.**

**Actions:**

- We will maintain a high standard of service delivery
- We will maintain a diverse funding base
- We will work closely with trusts and foundations at a strategic level to keep abreast of priorities and opportunities
- We will raise the profile of Age UK Lewisham and Southwark
- We will be open to partnership and consortium working with other voluntary sector partners
- We will continue to explore earned income opportunities through services as appropriate
- We will ensure our IT and other core support services are fit for purpose (including demonstrating resilience in line with best practice in relation to Business Continuity Planning in the face of future pandemics or other significant risks)
- We will maintain a strong and flexible organisational structure
- We will ensure best value in our purchasing and resourcing
- We will ensure best practice is followed in the recruitment and support of staff and volunteers
- We will ensure best value in our purchasing and financial management procedures
- We will ensure that our Trustees have the relevant set of skills and experience, reflect the make up of our boroughs appropriately – and are supported to ensure strong oversight of the strategic direction of the charity
- We will ensure appropriate use of our current reserves – to ensure we spend these appropriately during the very challenging times we are facing
- We will ensure that our Business Continuity Plans and Risk Registers are regularly reviewed and updated

- We will ensure that staff and volunteers are given appropriate and timely training in all relevant aspects of their roles

**How we will monitor and measure this:**

- We will use the Age UK Quality Standard and the Age UK Information and Advice Quality Mark as benchmarks for our work – and will ensure that we continue to hold these
- We will research and apply for funding from large trusts and public sector funders as well as seeking smaller and/or unrestricted funds
- We will record growth in partnerships and service use, which reflects our profile and standing
- We will track and promote our formalised partnerships and consortia and review annually
- Services will work with the finance team and report annually on income and growth potential
- Our organisational structure will be reviewed as appropriate when funding and services change. This may include the establishment of subsidiary charities and working in partnership with other organisations

# Measuring Our Success

## **Case Studies**

We gain the greatest insight into the benefit of our work by looking at the stories of individuals we have helped. Case studies highlight the instances where our approach is most successful and the positive changes we make to older people's lives. We provide case studies to our quarterly Trustee Operations Sub Committee meetings which also reviews how we engage with our service users to ensure our services meet their needs.

## **Sampling and feed back**

We know that case studies don't necessarily capture the average impact on all those we support, so we use random sampling and regular feed back from users to analyse their views and experiences and take action in response

## **External Review**

Whenever possible we will engage external researchers to gain an impartial and more rigorous evaluation of our work.

## **Our Reach and Outcomes**

We capture the number and demographics of those we support and use appropriate wellbeing measures (such as the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale) and surveys to measure impact over time. We also monitor our success in achieving specific goals for older people, for example additional income secured.

## **Secondary Data and Research**

Our approach is established and guided by evidence and research about what works.

## **Sharing and Learning**

We know that we need to do more to share information about the impact our work has on the people we support and seek out opportunities to engage with researchers who can help ensure that our understanding of the people we support and the effect of our work on their lives is robust and can be widely shared to help promote the interests of older people in our boroughs and beyond.

# Age UK Lewisham and Southwark

Age UK Lewisham and Southwark is a local charity providing essential support to older people in Lewisham and Southwark. We aim to improve the lives of older people in the London Boroughs of Lewisham and Southwark, working towards a future in which older people are valued, safe and empowered to make choices about their lives. We will do this by:

- Providing services and support that address poverty and isolation
- Protecting the rights of local older people
- Promoting health and wellbeing
- Connecting older people with their communities
- Working positively with partners across all sectors

## Ways to help:

**Donate:** If you would like to write us a cheque, please make it payable to Age UK Lewisham & Southwark and pop it along to us, by post or in person at any one of our offices. Giving online is quick and easy. You can make a one-off donation or a regular monthly donation to support our work through our Just Giving page: [www.justgiving.com/lewishamsouthwark](http://www.justgiving.com/lewishamsouthwark)

**Volunteer:** We have volunteers working in almost all of our services. There is a range of volunteering opportunities available with Age UK Lewisham and Southwark, so there is likely to be a role that will match your skills, interests and passions. We would love to welcome you to our team in a role that you will both enjoy and find hugely rewarding, and which will greatly benefit the older people we work with.

## Age UK Information & Advice Quality Standard

Age UK Lewisham and Southwark holds the Information & Advice Quality Programme (IAQP) which recognises the consistent, relevant and effective advice we provide to our clients.

### Advice Quality Standards

Age UK Lewisham and Southwark has achieved the Advice Quality Standards (AQS) recognising the high standard and quality of our Information and Advice service.



## Age UK Quality Standard

Age UK Lewisham and Southwark has achieved the Age UK Charity Quality Standard (CQS). The CQS is externally assessed.



Age UK Lewisham and Southwark is proud to be a London Living Wage employer