



Annual Report

April 2017 - March 2018

a project of



Lewisham
Connections



Introduction

The **Community Connections** project is a preventative community development programme linking the NHS, Lewisham Council and community services. The project provides ease of access and sustainable support to improve the health and wellbeing of vulnerable adults needing social care support in Lewisham.

Funded by Lewisham Council and the Better Care Fund, Community Connections is delivered through the Lewisham Connections partnership of six local charities. The project has been successfully running since 2013. It provides new routes for vulnerable adults to access local community provision and to become proactive and empowered to find sustainable community-based solutions to meet their individual needs.

From the beginning, organisational connections across the borough have been developed to ensure referral routes for Community Connections clients. The project's Community Development workers establish and maintain shared information and combined comprehensive support to local groups, developing and sustaining community services and activities.

This year, Community Development Workers also coordinated four Neighbourhood Community Development Partnerships for the first time, connecting community services with health and social care services for increased information sharing and improved service planning. The Neighbourhood Partnerships ensure that community and statutory services are providing a more joined-up approach to health and wellbeing across communities.

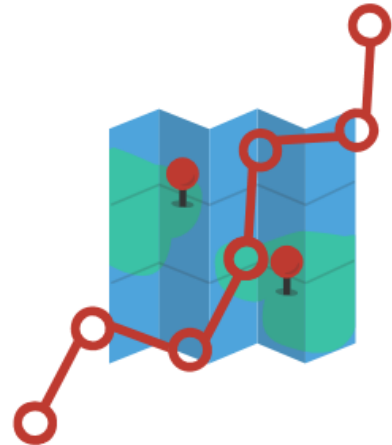
Alongside the project's development work, Community Facilitators continue to provide short-term, individualised and person-centred support to decrease isolation in clients. Community Facilitators work one-to-one with individuals to identify and engage with community groups or activities that may benefit them, as well as supporting to overcome practical barriers to engagement such as transportation.

We are pleased to present to you the work undertaken and key achievements of Community Connections throughout the 2017-2018 fiscal year.

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

CDWs might help with:

- Carrying out developments to services
- Training and guidance
- Setting up a new group or service
- Evidencing need, measuring impact or applying for funding
- Building social media and other IT skills
- Making use of under-used spaces
- Networking and making connections to other groups



CDWs support 10 Community Networks:

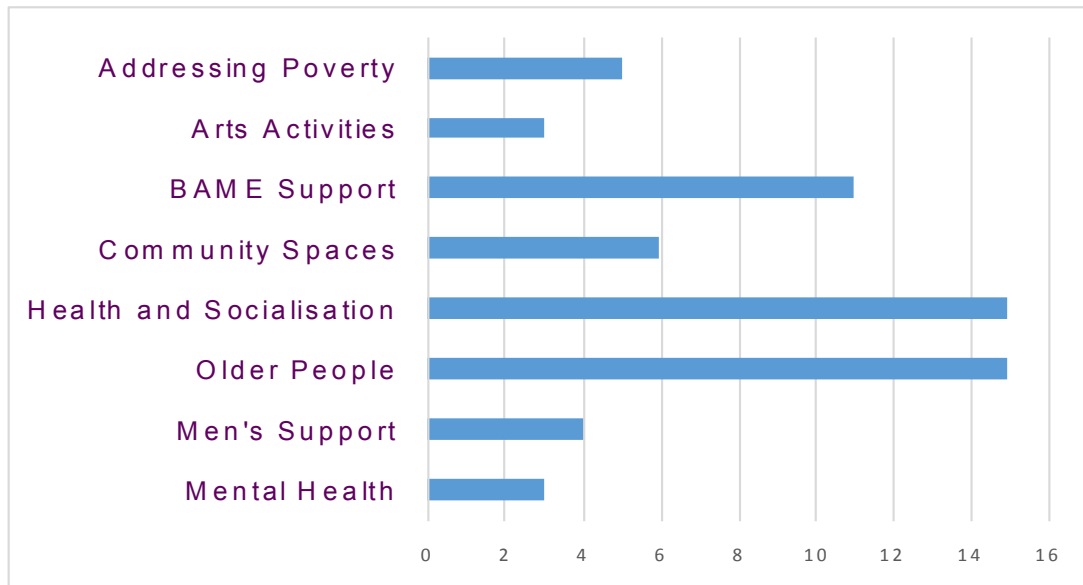


Older People Arts Network
Caribbean Social Forum
Lewisham BME Network
ESOL Providers Forum
Dementia Action Alliance
Friendship Network
Lewisham LGBT+ Forum
Community Spaces Network
Lewisham Mental Health Connections
Downham Nutrition Partnership

This year, CDWs carried out **517 development visits** and supported **39 groups** through development plans



Community Connections development plans support a number of vulnerable groups across the borough:



CDWs provided support to community groups and vulnerable adults through 517 development visits to community groups and 80 visits and outreach events to statutory healthcare teams.



CDWs work with local sheltered housing schemes, bringing residents and the local community together. One CDW, Charmaine, worked closely with **St Mauritius House**. She visited the residents and found that they wanted information on healthy eating and dementia. Residents were also keen on having a fun cultural event that they could enjoy with their friends and family. Charmaine combined these requests by inviting a dance group to perform and holding workshops on the topics the residents wanted to hear about.

Participants enjoyed a Quadrille dance performance promoting Jamaican cultural heritage. One resident said, "This has been a fantastic event. The food has been brilliant and I'm looking forward to many more lunches with my friends. **I like to see everybody enjoying themselves and tapping their feet to the music. This brings back my cultural roots.** The dancing has been wonderful and has sparked everyone's enthusiasm."

Neighbourhood Community Development Partnerships



Neighbourhood Community Development Partnerships (NCDPs) build a formalised partnership between community development workers, organisations and other key stakeholders at a neighbourhood level, facilitating a joined-up approach to the development and delivery of community-based care. NCDPs identify resources within communities to maximise community potential while also highlighting gaps in service provision and working to develop services to meet those needs.

To date, NCDPs have:

- Brought local community and statutory health and care provision together to jointly develop a picture of the needs and priorities in local health and social care
 - Developed a bidding system to allocate Public Health funds to the local communities in response to the priorities identified, based on participatory budgeting principles
 - Collaborated with community partners on asset-based local development plans for each neighbourhood
 - Provided a learning and networking opportunity for more than 140 participants
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Supporting Community Groups to Fundraise

The NCDPs work in partnership with LB Lewisham Public Health, which has allocated £100K to be distributed to community groups in response to the needs and priorities identified by the NCDPs.

Community Connections CDWs facilitated the NCDPs this year, successfully distributing £25K to each of the four neighbourhoods.

In addition, CDWs worked individually with community groups and organisations to receive a **further £5K in funding** from ward assemblies and the Positive Aging Council.

NCDPs: a Case Study

Formerly known as Seniors, the Stanstead Lodge Senior Club (SLSC) has undergone some major changes this year. The renaming of the community venue is just one of the outward signs of change, reflecting a shift in the culture of the organisation. SLSC aims to broaden its support to the community and is now open to adults of all ages with annual membership no longer restricted only to over-55s. Community Connections supported a music group for adults of all ages with visual impairments called Feeling the Noise to use SLSC as a venue, 'breaking through' the age barrier. The vibrancy and change of perspective that Feeling the Noise brought to SLSC and its members was a strong initial step in expanding its offer.

SLSC is using the NCDP funded neighbourhood Volunteer Co-ordinator to develop their volunteering offer and strategy. The participation of SLSC in the Neighbourhood Community Development Partnership has brought a renewal of energy and the opportunity, further reflecting SLSC's drive to widen its reach in the community.



One community group who participates in the NCDPs said:

"It feels very collaborative and inspiring, like there's a lot of work to do but in a good way."

Small outcomes that lead to big changes:

- Offers to share workspaces and hot desking
- Shared ideas for external funding
- Collaborative mapping of community assets
- Volunteers become increasingly communal as groups work together
- Increased signposting of members between community activities

2017-2018 in Community Development: Case Studies

The people Community Connections work with may be isolated for diverse reasons, not only because of ill health but because they may be part of a socially-excluded group.



CDWs are part of the **Lewisham LGBT+ Forum**, helping to build a safe space for LGBT+ people in the borough and working to increase equalities awareness. This summer, a CDW organised a film showing with the Lewisham LGBT+ Forum.

The film showing brought together local LGBT+ people from a variety of backgrounds. Former members of a local LGBT group were reunited after more than 30 years, and **the LGBT+ Forum has helped build an increased offer for older LGBT people** as a result!

World Mental Health Day is an annual day of recognition for mental health issues and the people whose lives are impacted by them. This year a CDW arranged a conference linking statutory mental health services, community sector support and local residents to **celebrate mental health services around the borough and to recognise the work done by people with mental health issues to manage their health.**

The event was supported by Cllr Jonathan Slater and organised by partners of Lewisham Mental Health Connection including: Community Connections, Hexagon, Apax, QVT, Metropolitan Police, Bromley and Lewisham Mind, Lewisham Council, Certitude and the Lewisham Pensioners Forum. It included information stalls and workshops on topics ranging from Employment, Laughter Yoga, Mindfulness, Art Therapy and Self-Management. There were **over 100 people in attendance**, and the day was a great success for all!



Community Facilitators (CFs) work one-to-one with isolated individuals using person-centred plans

CFs support vulnerable adults in the community who are isolated or lonely. They use a person-centred approach based around the 5 Ways to Wellbeing model.

This year CFs supported 1005 isolated adults.

CFs meet with clients to talk about the person's hobbies and interests, making a plan together to connect to community groups and activities including:

- **Social groups:** such as arts activities, gardening, lunch clubs
- **Groups around an identity:** such as LGBT+ groups, older people's groups, carers' groups
- **Groups which support specific needs:** such as learning disability activities, dementia groups, sensory impairment groups
- **Other groups which fit the person's interests and needs**



CFs also help clients identify and overcome practical barriers to wellbeing and social inclusion:

Dial a Ride / TaxiCard, Blue Badge or Freedom Pass
Food Bank vouchers
Domestic Violence support
Links to ethnic communities and culturally-specific support
HandyPerson / Help at Home
Toenail and fingernail cutting
ID cards for neurological conditions
Links to Money Management and Debt Advice



2017-2018 in Community Facilitation: Case Studies

*names and faces have been changed to protect client privacy

Helen* contracted meningitis when she was a child, which left her with a range of learning disabilities. She was not comfortable socialising because she could sometimes be socially inappropriate or lose her speech completely due to her brain injury. She is unable to read or write, and she also has seizures.

The CF contacted Headway, a charity who are running the "Justice Project" giving free ID cards to people with brain injury. Headway sent a referral form, and the CF and Helen filled it in together. Helen was posted a wallet-sized card with her picture and a summary of her difficulties.



With her new ID card to hand, Helen is now confident enough to go to the Rushey Green Time Bank and has started to go to a knitting group where she is being taught how to knit. Helen also went on a Margate trip with the group this summer!



Gladys* hadn't seen anybody outside of family and doctors for over a year when she was referred to us. She spent all day alone in her armchair. A CF escorted Gladys to the Calabash Centre and introduced her to a few people. It turned out that Gladys knew most of the people from way back – other nurses that she had worked with or people from when she was raising her children in Catford. She has continued to attend every week.

Her daughter had this to say:

"Mum is doing really great... she just loves Calabash I've never known her to be up and dressed so fast on Tuesdays & Thursdays... it has really made a difference to her speech and movement! I thank you so much for that!"

2017-2018 in Community Facilitation: Case Studies

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Feedback from a community organisation about our client Ida*:

Dear CF,

I have at last matched Ida with a really lovely lady who is English but of Jamaican parentage and can crack jokes and share stories of Jamaica and talk about the food she enjoys (which they did). I think Ida had lost more of her memory since our first meeting but it did not stop her enjoying the conversation. Jane*, the volunteer, has put her details in the back of the carer's register so that Ida knows who is coming. I think it is a good match and Jane is a part time social worker so she is quite confident and will encourage Ida to do different things and visit her weekly.

All the best,

[Coordinator of a local befriending group]

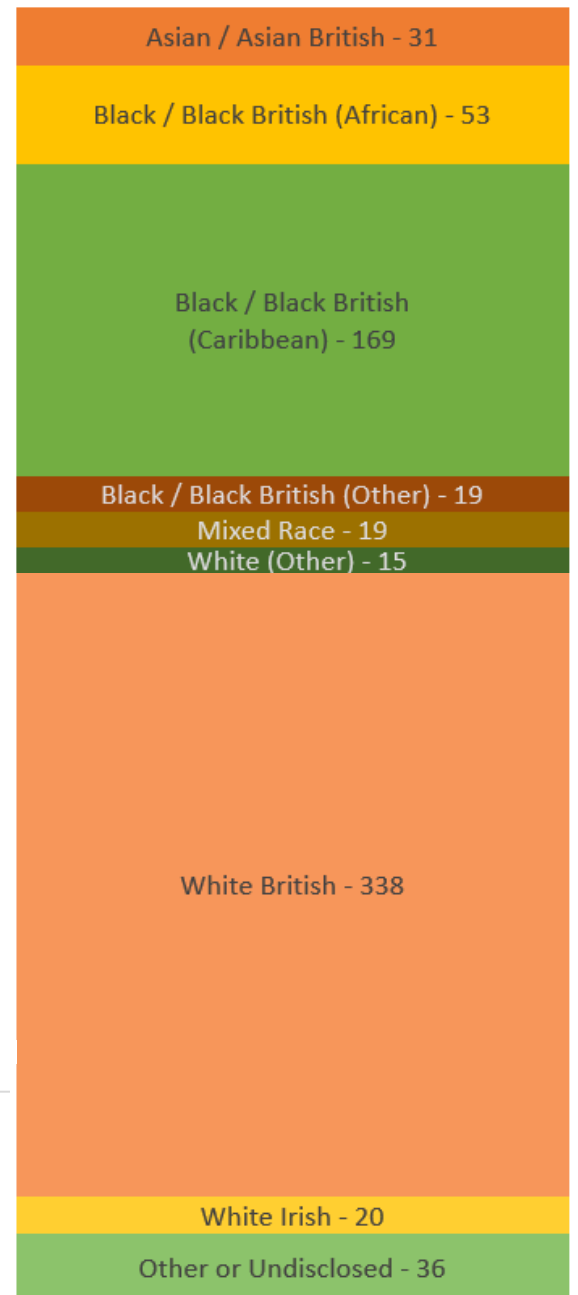
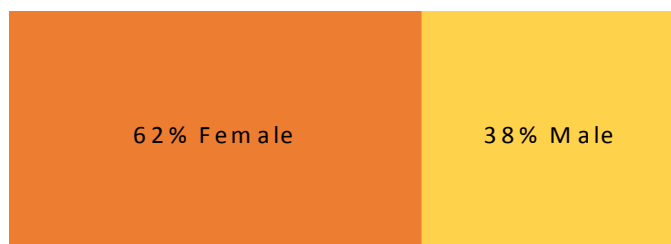
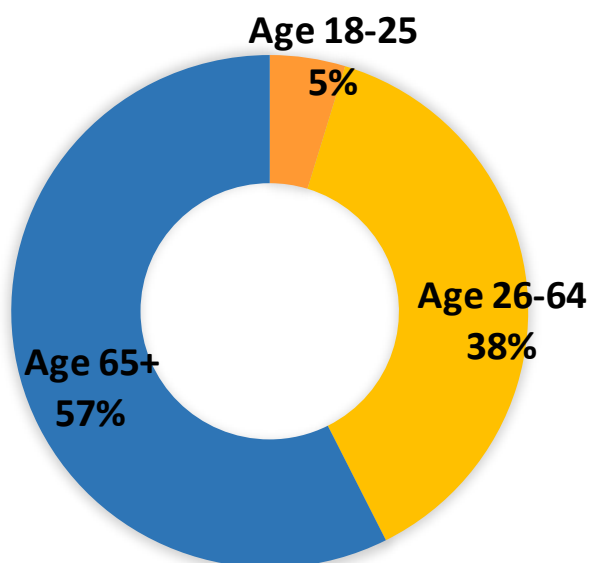


Kenneth* has agoraphobia, leaving him depressed and isolated. When the CF visited, Kenneth also disclosed a cancer diagnosis. The CF referred him to Macmillan's Buddies scheme, who offer a listening ear and helping hand to reduce isolation and anxiety for people affected by cancer. Kenneth is also unable to maintain his garden; he was referred for a Good Gym mission to sort

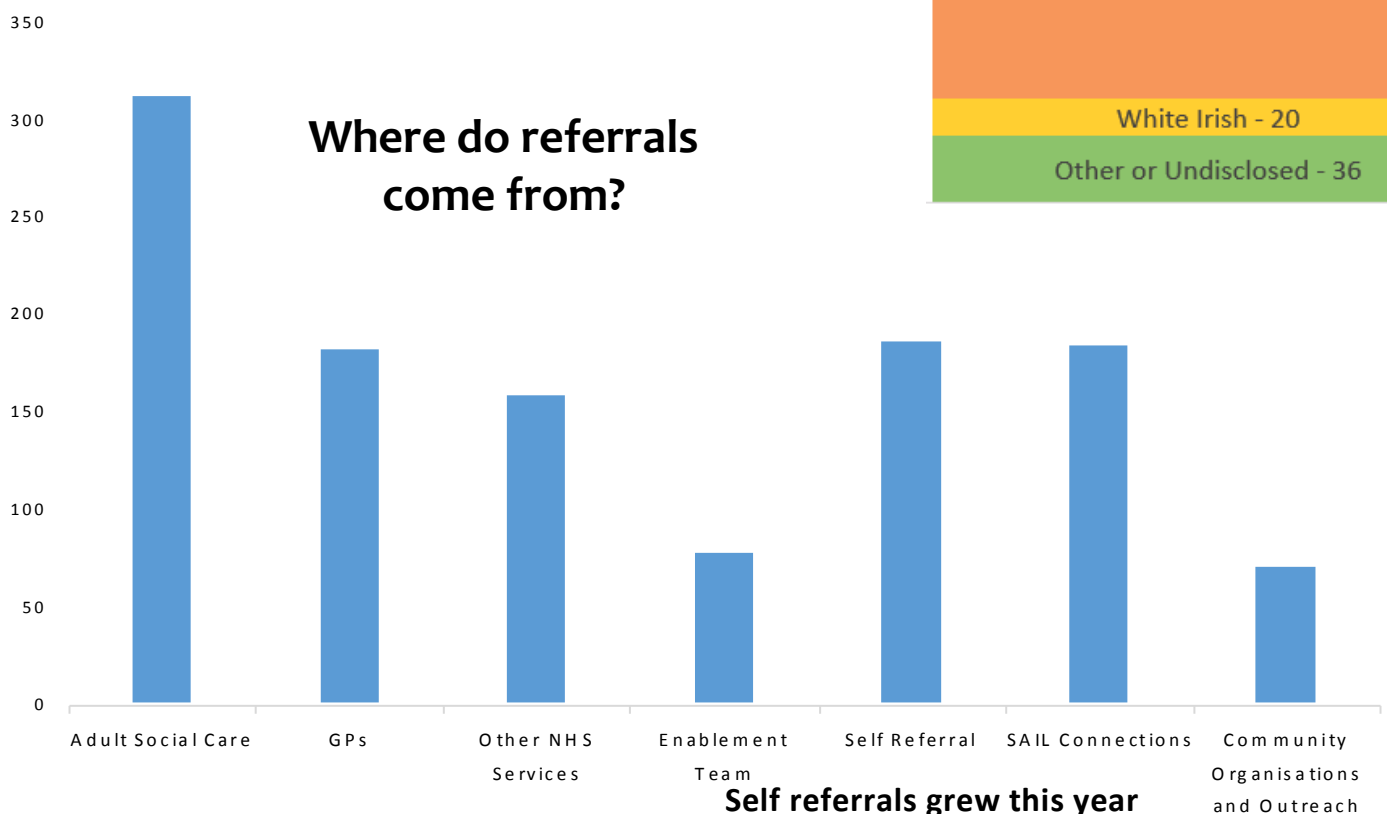
this out. Kenneth's garden is in a much better condition now, which has helped to lift his mood. He says, **"I'm so happy that I can enjoy spending time in my garden again."**

Kenneth further mentioned having poor balance, so the CF referred him to Linkline and the Falls Service. He now attends a Falls Prevention class, which has helped to build his confidence. It has given him the opportunity to meet and connect with new people and he states he is feeling happier and more positive in himself as a result.

Who are Community Connections clients?

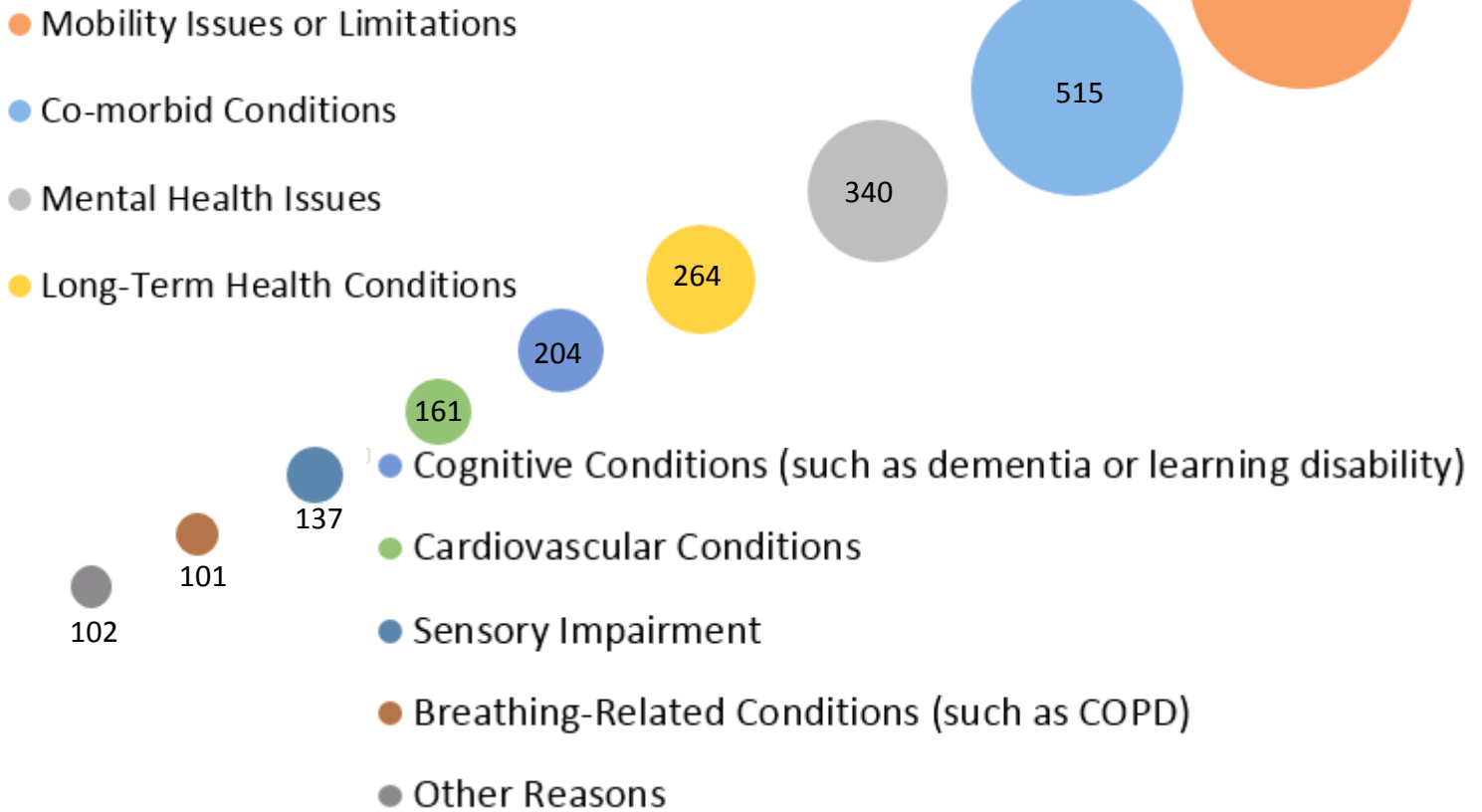


Where do referrals come from?



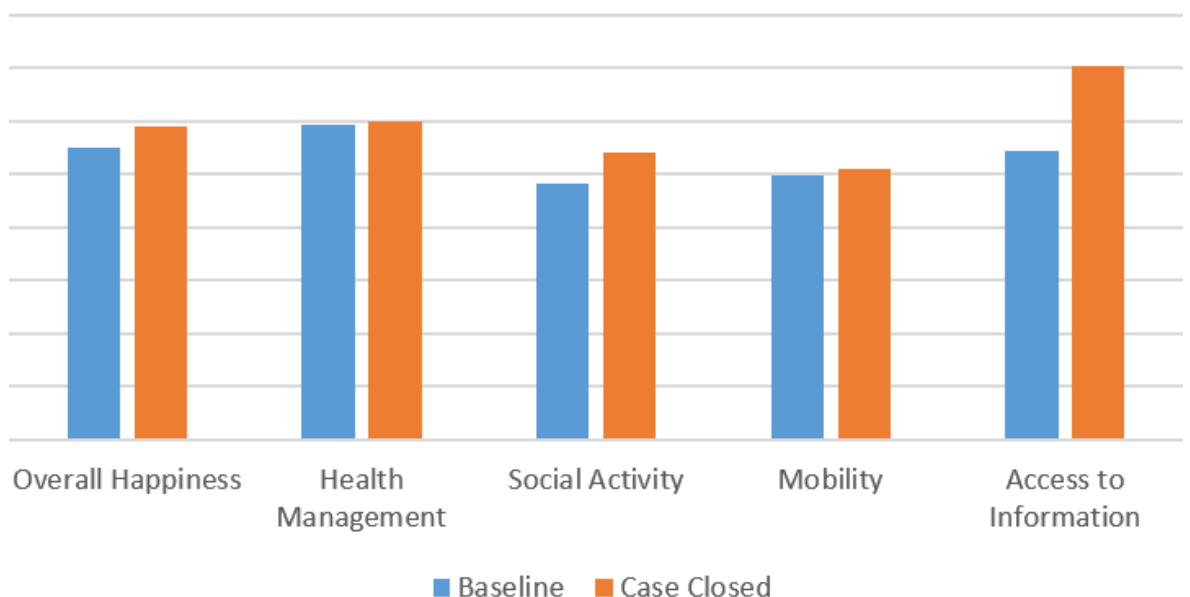
Self referrals grew this year
from 13% of referrals in 2016-2017
to **19% of referrals** in 2017-2018

Why are clients referred to Community Connections?



Community Connections uses a **Wellbeing Scale** to measure impact: clients are asked to self-report on their wellbeing when we first make contact and after we finish working with them. **69% of clients reported an increase in wellbeing** after receiving Community Connections support.

Self-reported Wellbeing



Community Connections is a project of the **Lewisham Connections consortium**: Age UK Lewisham and Southwark, Carers Lewisham, Lewisham Disability Coalition, Rushey Green Time Bank, Voluntary Action Lewisham and Voluntary Services Lewisham

Partnership working is key to the work that Community Connections does in Lewisham and the support we provide to vulnerable adults in the community.

Voluntary Services Lewisham have paired up with the **Pepys Resource Centre** in Deptford to deliver a befriending group for isolated older people in the area. Community Connections have been able to place many clients in this group who would otherwise not have opportunities to socialise. VSL have also been able to support the members with transportation, allowing them to attend the group and combatting the stress of being homebound.



ChART (Chinbrook Action Resident Team), a group of local residents working with Local Trust and **Lewisham Disability Coalition**, has worked to bring local people together to form a resident-led partnership driving the programme for the benefit of all who live in the Chinbrook Big Local area.

Community Connections supported ChART to survey more than 200 local residents to ensure that the ChART programme is driven by and for the local residents.



AUKLS run two projects in Lewisham supplementing Community Connections: **Advice and Information** and **SAIL (Safe and Independent Living)**.



Community Connections benefit by directly linking into these services for isolated older people.

Rushey Green Time Bank (RGTB) supports Community Connections in a number of ways: they coordinate many groups that Community Facilitators refer clients to, and RGTB also organise trips out that benefit Community Connections clients.



RGTB run WildCat Wilderness, a community garden for all to build skills and enjoy.

RGTB members and Community Connections clients took a trip to the Margate seafront this summer



Carers Lewisham and Voluntary Action Lewisham support the Community Connections project as well, taking the role of advisory members.

Carers Lewisham supports Carers in the London Borough of Lewisham aged 5 upwards. It is run by and for carers: many of staff, trustees and volunteers are or have been carers.

Voluntary Action Lewisham is a membership charity providing leadership and support to charities, community groups and social enterprises working to enhance the lives of Lewisham residents.

Both play a key role in the steering and strategy of the Community Connections project.

London Borough of Lewisham

