

Ageing Well Southwark



Support For Seniors & Carers

Progress Report April 2022

Ageing Well

Southwark



Support For
Seniors & Carers

1. Background and Introduction

This document seeks to give an overview of the achievements of the Ageing Well Southwark service to date – and some of the challenges older people, their carers and the organisations seeking to support them have faced during these unprecedented times.

Ageing Well Southwark – Support for Seniors and Carers is a flexible service to help older people and their carers discover and access the range of financial, social and practical support available to them in Southwark. The service offers personalised planning to make it easier for seniors and their carers to discover new and meaningful opportunities to make friends, feel closer to their communities and ensure they are able to remain as independent as possible for as long as possible. The service has sites (“Sub Hubs”) across the borough where people can drop-in, as well as a phone line, email and online referral processes, and a website where people can directly access information about support services, such as Befriending, specialist Welfare Advice, the Handy Person and Happy Feet (toenail cutting) services. The service provides simple ‘signposting’ (eg sharing a telephone number of a service a person is interested in accessing) as well as providing more active support (via making referrals or more practical hands-on support) to help people to access Council services, including adaptations and support in the home, and the huge range of exciting social activities and groups provided by the voluntary and community sector across the borough.

The service is commissioned by Southwark Council from Age UK Lewisham and Southwark who deliver the contract in partnership with Southwark Council and the Consortium of Older People’s Services in Southwark (COPSINS). The COPSINS partners are:



Link Age Southwark
Communities supporting older people



Time & Talents
Where everyone feels part of a community



The service was originally tendered as “The Older People’s and Carers’ Hub” and the contract was awarded to Age UK Lewisham and Southwark, who submitted a bid in partnership with the COPSINS group of local charities. Tendering for this new way of working was a bold statement of intent from Southwark Council, reflecting a commitment to partnership working with local voluntary organisations, bringing statutory and non-statutory services together so that older people and their carers could access both Council and voluntary sector services in a seamless way (as required by the Care Act 2014).

Following the award of the tender, older people and carers were asked what they would like to name the service and they chose, “Ageing Well – Support for Seniors and Carers”.



From 1st June 2020 Age UK Lewisham & Southwark and their fellow COPSINS members have been providing a new ‘front door’ service for older residents of Southwark (aged 60 or above) and their carers who are looking for support and who may benefit from being connected to the wide range of public and voluntary sector services available to them.

Working in close partnership with Southwark Council Adult Social Care, the new service saw Age UK L&S staff co-locating with Southwark Council’s Older People and Physical Disability service at the Southwark Resource Centre (SRC) in providing the central Hub for the Ageing Well Southwark service. Callers to the central Hub now find their calls being answered by an Age UK L&S Ageing Well Facilitator or a Council Customer Service Officer – both of whom can help people explore their needs and wishes and provide support to help them engage with relevant services - including those provided by the COPSINS partners and the Council - and by other providers in the community.

The Age UK L&S Facilitators (who are trained in giving strength-based and person-centred support to older people and their carers) work alongside their Council colleagues at the SRC and collectively take calls and manage online referrals to help older people and their carers to participate in their local communities and access the wide range of services available, including leisure and social activities which promote physical and mental wellbeing and can help address the underlying causes of social care needs.

The COPSINS partners provide “Sub-Hubs” across the borough where people can contact them directly, including by dropping-in (when Covid-restrictions and service-adaptations make this safe)

and from where they can access the same support and get access to the same wide range of services as they would if they were to contact the central Hub.

The service provides access to:

- Specialist Information and Advice, delivered by dedicated Advisors with specific knowledge relating to carers and older people, including advice relating to:
 - Welfare Benefits - checks and applications
 - Housing issues
 - Community Care
 - Utilities and other consumer issues
 - Accessing Transport
 - Signposting and identifying suitable support on legal matters, debt and immigration issues
- Befriending services
- “Handy Person Services” which can provide a wide range of small repair jobs to help people live safely and independently at home, and ensuring homes are free from trip and fall hazards
- “Happy Feet” toenail cutting, to help older people retain their mobility and confidence
- A range of falls-prevention activities
- A range of exercise and activity groups provided at the sub Hubs
- IT support (including peer-support and access to devices with data) provided at the sub Hubs
- Referrals and ‘signposting’ to the wide range of services in the community – including exercise classes, cultural activities, self-help and group activities delivered both online and face-to-face)

The service can be contacted by telephone via 0207 525 3324, online at <https://ageingwellsouthwark.org/> or by contacting any of the COPSINS partners.

Case Study: A client was referred into Age UK L&S. Initial contact was based on the client's desire for information on the Handy Person Service. It was discovered that the client also needed help with a passport application and making an application for PIP. Client was also experiencing significant depression as a result of a recent bereavement and significant mobility issues. The client was then connected with Southwark Pensioners centre who successfully supported her with form filling for her

*PIP application
AWS (Central Hub)*

2. Achievements: a story in numbers...

The numbers below show cumulative figures of the activity reported by the AWS service. These figures reflect the huge amount of work undertaken in support of older people and their carers since the start of the contract in June 2020.

PLEASE NOTE THAT THESE FIGURES DO NOT INCLUDE WORK UNDERTAKEN BY SOUTHWARK COUNCIL COLLEAGUES WHO JOINTLY DELIVER THIS SERVICE VIA THE OPPD TEAM AT THE SOUTHWARK RESOURCE CENTRE – BUT ONLY REFLECT WORK DELIVERED BY AGE UK LEWISHAM AND SOUTHWARK AND OUR COLLEAGUES IN THE COPSINS GROUP OF CHARITIES DELIVERING WORK FOR AWS AND REPORTED VIA AGE UK L&S’ QUARTERLY KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR RETURNS.

Every quarter, Age UK L&S and its COPSINS delivery partners collate data on the activities they are delivering via the AWS service. These are shared with Southwark Council. Because this was a new model of service delivery, the contract did not start with formal targets, but instead, these were to be developed in year one by looking at the first quarters and then setting targets to ensure the service grew and delivered services that people wanted and could access. As a result of Covid and the disruption it caused, the AWS service has not yet developed formal targets – as it has been hard to extrapolate reasonable expectations for the service when each quarter has been so different from the last in relation to lockdown rules, the vaccine roll-out, and the availability of accurate home testing etc. We are currently looking to develop formal quarterly targets as things seem to have settled down to a “new normal” for the time being at least, in relation to Covid and its associated restrictions (and the new ways that we are now able to deliver services. See section 4. *Covid: The Unwanted Guest*, below, for more details).

- The AWS service had **78,901** contacts with older people and/or carers (including by phone, face to face and online)
- **605** new carers of older people have been identified and supported
- **3,100** people have been provided with Information and Advice
- **1,193** people have been *referred* to statutory health, housing or social care services
- **834** people including carers have been *supported* to make appointments and contact other agencies
- **2,326** people have been *signposted* to community-based services provided by the voluntary sector

- **794** people including carers have been provided with physical support to complete forms
- **890** people have maximised their income as a result of support from the AWS Information and Advice service. Within one year this is likely to provide income maximisation of approximately **£768,000** for these clients
- **885** Handy Persons jobs have been undertaken
- **190** people have been provided with basic equipment or assistive technology prescribed with support from AWS
- **2,757** events have been delivered by COPSINS partners, attended by **8,104** service users
- **328** new befriending relationships and **2,190** ongoing befriending relationships have been supported by AWS
- **385** people, including carers, are benefiting from peer support
- **357** carers have been provided with support for emergency back-up planning
- **106** people, including carers, have been supported with planning for the future
- **417** individuals have participated in external surveys and consultations
- **730** service users who have engaged in consultation and engagement with AWS
- There have been **3,675** instances of people who do not use AWS services volunteering within AWS sub-Hubs
- **26** AWS service users, including carers have been supported to access volunteering opportunities in the community
- **220** AWS service users are active participants in the delivery of AWS services
- There have been **131** events and opportunities for children and young people to engage with AWS activities with older people and their carers

Information and Advice (Age UK L&S)

We've increased the weekly income of our Southwark clients by £14,772 – or £768,000 over 52 weeks of the year. One-off or backdated increases have added a further £102,500 to Southwark residents' income.

We can see the difference we make with the income maximisation figures, just in terms of improving client incomes, but it's incredibly valuable to hear from clients in their own words about the differences our assistance has made.

"You have taken a massive weigh off my shoulder, it's nice to know that I am not on my own".

3.The Vision

Southwark Council has identified five “Visions” for the Ageing Well Southwark. These are:

- **The opportunity to access timely, personalized information, advice, guidance or onward referral in way convenient to them**
- **Improved access to community services - residents and their families and carers are fully involved in planning their care and feel services are provided in a holistic way.**
- **Residents feel that they have access to services to improve their wellbeing**
- **A strengths-based approach to adult social care with good customer service at the core will build resilience within the community in order to help people live independently for as long as possible.**
- **A service that learns and evolves and embraces the digital agenda.**

The sections that follows outline how we have worked to achieve these ‘visions’ in the first twenty months of the contract.

3.1.The opportunity to access timely, personalized information, advice, guidance or onward referral in way convenient to them

The AWS service has provided information, advice, guidance and onward referrals in a range of ways that best suit older people and their carers. The social-distancing measures that were put in place due to the pandemic meant that physical access to the AWS Hubs, where we would usually encourage people to attend in order to access support from AWS, has been limited at times. However, the central Hub and the community-based Sub Hubs have been providing a range of information, advice, guidance and referrals to other services via telephone, online and – when appropriate within Covid-guidance – face-to-face.

To date the AWS service has:

- Had almost 60,000 contacts with older people (including face to face meetings, phone calls, Zoom/Facetime/Teams calls etc)
- Almost 600 new carers have received support from the AWS service who were not previously known to us
- Almost 900 older people/ carers for older people were provided with Information and Advice by the AWS team of dedicated and Advice workers

- Provided almost 4,000 referrals/signposts/support to access services for older people/carers of older people (including statutory and non-statutory services)

A new Ageing Well Southwark website has been created – www.ageingwellsouthwark.org. This includes a searchable directory of relevant services and activities that is continually being expanded, as well as referral forms for people wanting to access specific services and/or to speak to one of the Ageing Well Facilitators who can help them navigate local service offers and develop person-centred plans to help people find and take part in the range of engagement and support that is available locally. We are now planning to add more tools and information to the site to help people self-manage their own circumstances when appropriate – as part of our strength-based approach (See 3.4, below for details of “strength-based working”).

The range of partners agreeing to accept referrals from AWS (via the “SAIL form”) has increased. The SAIL form is a simple checklist that outlines the main services that can be accessed. SAIL partners agree to receive referrals from us via this form and respond to these quickly and appropriately. Engagement with clients may lead to a simple referral and/or a detailed person-centred and strength-based appointment with a Facilitator who can help the client explore their needs and wishes and support them to access relevant services.

As the lockdown restrictions ease, more people are fully-vaccinated and we are used to running face-to-face services with appropriate PPE, CO2 monitors etc., we are opening up more face-to-face access points for the Ageing Well Southwark service. For example, people can now receive Information and Advice services at a number of the Sub Hub sites, with more to follow.

3.2. Improved access to community services - residents and their families and carers are fully involved in planning their care and feel services are provided in a holistic way.

Facilitation clients are offered a “person-centred” assessment which ensure that they are involved in planning the care and services they wish to access. (“Person-centred” working means treating everyone as an individual, regardless of any specific needs they may have. The focus is on the person and what they can do, not their condition or any disability they may have. Support should focus on achieving the person’s aspirations and be tailored to their needs and unique circumstances, and services should be designed to fit with them – not the other way around.)

The integration of the Age UK L&S staff and Council colleagues at the central-Hub is a key focus of the service and work to help the teams learn from each other within the same service is ongoing – with cultural and practical integration a constant theme of the work to date. Both Age UK L&S Facilitators and Council CSOs have reported the benefits of working alongside each other. Knowledge has been shared and improved outcomes for older people have been achieved and integration continues to develop the skillsets and confidence of all parties.

A client rang to say thank you to the Handy Person team, “They were excellent. I struggle to get help and am really grateful” She mentioned speaking with Hannah and Genya, who helped her connect with the Handy person service and who she said were “really lovely” and said that AWS “seems like a nice team”

3.3. Residents feel that they have access to services to improve their wellbeing

Engagement with older people and their carers to see how useful they are finding the service, and measuring the borough-wide awareness of Ageing Well Southwark, are key elements of the contract that have been made more difficult as a result of the pandemic. However, an Engagement Group of older people and their carers is currently being established. We will use this to try to learn more about the service and how it can be improved, and also to ask this group for recommendations for ways that we can effectively reach out more widely to gather the views of older people and their carers in Southwark with a view to improving services.



Case Study: Client is 69 years old and is living on her own in sheltered accommodation. The pandemic left her feeling increasingly isolated. Her family does not live near her, and she had only found one friend in her area as she moved to the area just before the pandemic started. She has a computer and is comfortable using it, but was not aware of any community activities and support that might suit her and be available in her area.

Following contact with AWS the client was offered a free Christmas meal and was referred to a telephone befriending service and an appropriate local social club. The client was signposted to a variety of online exercise classes for older people and informed of local groups and activities that would run in person in non-COVID times. The client was also put in touch with the Handy Person service to support with her with work on her garden which needed to be made safe from trip-hazards. We are now planning to get back in touch with the client to see if she has been able to access the social groups and activities or to see if she might want support or encouragement to access these.

AWS (Central Hub)

We are also now reviewing ways to measure the qualitative outcomes of the service, and undertaking bespoke monitoring of the range of services provided via Ageing Well Southwark.

A range of services and activities has been on offer to residents throughout the contract – subject to the challenges of Covid. Many services that we would usually have expected to refer clients to in order to help their health and wellbeing were not open for face-to-face activities - but many online activities have been offered and accessed. Phone contact with clients has been consistent throughout. Access to food became a major issue for older people during the lockdowns and a range of related services were developed by AWS and its partners that AWS referred clients to. Social isolation also became even more of an important issue to address, so befriending services were remodelled to offer online and telephone befriending which was a key and essential service helping older people and their carers. The Sub Hubs were closed to face-to-face work for long periods during the first year of the contract, but clients were able to contact the services by phone and online. Many clients were supported to access the range of new online services (and supported to access these via the provision of devices with free data and support to use these).

AWS supported almost 4,000 older people/carers of older people with signposts/referrals/support to access a range of services (including statutory and non-statutory provision) in the first twenty months of the contract.

Examples of the activities that older people and their carers have accessed via the AWS service (including some directly provided by AWS delivery partners, and others provided by other local voluntary organisations) include:

- Salsa classes
- Chair-based exercises (including *Seated Disco*, *Cheerleading* and more)
- Local History groups
- Trips to museums, cinemas and theatres
- Zumba classes
- Black History Month events
- Singing groups (including specialist sessions for people with COPD)
- Computer classes
- Line Dancing
- Recorder playing
- Quizzes
- Peer support sessions for carers
- Art groups
- Coach trips
- Coffee mornings/ Lunch Clubs
- Boat trips
- *And many, many more!*



3.4. A strengths-based approach to adult social care with good customer service at the core will build resilience within the community in order to help people live independently for as long as possible.

The Ageing Well Southwark service seeks to be “strength-based” and “person-centred.” These ideas are distinct but related. The Care Act 2014 requires local authorities to “consider the person’s own strengths and capabilities, and what support might be available from their wider support network or within the community to help” in considering “what else other than the provision of care and support might assist the person in meeting the outcomes they want to achieve”. This means that anyone seeking support from Ageing Well Southwark should be treated as a whole-person with their own skills, ambitions and priorities and not merely as a set of needs and demands that should be addressed. The “strength-based” element of this way of working includes identifying individuals’ strengths – including their personal, community and social networks – and working to maximise those strengths to enable them to achieve their desired outcomes, meet their needs and improve or maintain their wellbeing and independence.

Southwark Council has commissioned the IPC consultancy to undertake a range of training on the implementation of the strength-based approach to service delivery and this work is ongoing. Research undertaken by IPC into how embedded this approach is within the central Hub of the Ageing Well Southwark service towards the end of 2021 (and which included anonymous surveys and workshop events) has led to a report that is currently being used as a basis for the development of an action plan to help further develop this way of working in Southwark.



A key reason for the contract being delivered by local voluntary sector organisations is because many of these have histories of working in person-centred and strength-based ways, and also because of their links to (and in some cases, direct provision of) a wide range of community-based activities, including a wide range of peer-led activities.

3.5. A service that learns and evolves and embraces the digital agenda.

The new Ageing Well Southwark website– www.ageingwellsouthwark.org - includes a searchable directory of relevant services and activities that is continually being expanded. It also provides access to referral forms for people who know what services they want or who want to speak to one of the Ageing Well Facilitators who can help them navigate local service and find sources of engagement and support locally. More tools and information to help people manage their own circumstances when appropriate – as part of our strength-based approach – will be added in the next few months.

The central Hub has been exploring the use of a new 'transactional form' (and considered the use of chat-bot technology) to help steer people to the right service online and we hope this will be in use by the end of 2022.

Whilst we are committed to keeping a telephone and face-to-face route to our services, helping more people to overcome the 'digital divide' is a key aim for the contract. The delivery partners at the Sub-Hubs all aim to host IT support sessions for older people to help them increase their confidence in getting online and this work is restarting after delays due to Covid (See 4.4, below, for details) and the importance of this work has been further highlighted by the pandemic.

Our online offers and services have greatly increased as a result of the pandemic and the engagement of families and older people with enhanced digital services has been demonstrated through the huge increase in online participation in virtual activities and events.

Since opening our groups back up again we have started two new groups both of which are partnerships with local churches. These are both lunch and social groups, as following the restrictions, we have been keen to offer more opportunities for peer interaction and 'breaking bread together'. One partnership is with the United Reform Church and the other is with St Barnabas. We are still running a combination of online, hybrid (on and offline) and in person groups so that we can ensure that no one is excluded!

Link Age Southwark

4.COVID19: the unwelcome guest...

At the time that the contract was awarded, we were just starting to hear about a “novel coronavirus” that seemed to be heading our way. This was the first of many new words and phrases that quickly became part of our standard vocabulary, along with ‘lockdown’, ‘variant’ and ‘you’re still on mute.’ In the early stages of the pandemic nobody could imagine the huge long-term impact that Covid19 would have on society – and particularly on older people. One of the key purposes of the Ageing Well Southwark contract was to provide a range of “front doors” to services across the borough, but by the time the contract started in June 2020, many of those doors were firmly closed as lockdown measures were implemented.

Older people and their carers were justifiably nervous about the virus and facing increased social isolation as a result of social-distancing and lockdown measures taken to reduce its spread. As a result, the Ageing Well Southwark service was needed more than ever and in response a range of service changes were quickly implemented – these included keeping as many face to face services as possible open with the use of face masks and other PPE, using larger, airier meeting spaces, temperature checking and the application of lots of hand sanitiser - whilst simultaneously supporting some staff and volunteers to work from home using new technology that enabled them to take calls forwarded from office landlines via the internet and having to find new ways to deliver services online. The delivery of the new contract was always going to be a challenge – but having to deliver services in the context of Covid19 made this even more difficult. As used to be said of Ginger Rogers and Fred Astaire: *“She did everything he did, just backwards and in high-heels”* it seems that Ageing Well Southwark had to do everything it had originally planned, but now not only in-person and by phone but also by online and all whilst wearing PPE.



The Southwark Resource Centre (central Hub) has remained open throughout every stage of the pandemic – with social distancing and use of PPE etc for staff - so that the integration of the Council and Age UK L&S staff teams would not be disrupted. This has meant that the team have been able to respond to phone calls, emails and online referrals whilst working towards ever-closer integration, sharing best-practice and increasing each other’s’ knowledge of services.

4.1. Reaching Out

At the start of the pandemic the COPSINS partners changed their model of working and started to make proactive outgoing phone calls – instead of waiting to be contacted by older people and their carers with specific need. For Age UK L&S alone, this involved making over 7,000 telephone calls and sending over 800 letters to people who had engaged with in the previous 12 months. Over 3,100 clients were contacted in the first 6 months of the pandemic and many told us of immediate practical needs they had – such as difficulties with food shopping and collecting prescriptions etc.



Case Study: 81-year-old, female. The client contacted Age UK L&S to ask for advice with sorting out her boiler which she was very concerned about – due to disrepair (leading to fears about overheating, lack of ventilation and potential catastrophic breakdown). She had not been able to communicate successfully with her landlord (L&S) and they would not agree to visit her to look at the boiler. Our Handy Person service visited, explained how the carbon-monoxide alarm worked and made sure it was functioning properly. The Handy Person also provided more context for the boiler disrepair by advising that this is a structural issue as the furniture is too close to the boiler's ventilation system. The Facilitator talked through the steps the client would need to take to ensure the boiler was working safely and she agreed to try these herself before getting back in touch with us. Our team liaised with the council's repairs and fire safety teams to get a same-day visit for the client to make sure there was no immediate danger and got assurance that they would look into long-term repairs of the boiler. The client also experiences social-isolation and lack of energy (leading her to stay in bed on some days) but did not want to discuss or address these until the boiler was repaired. We are now working to encourage the client to address these other issues. She has been referred for a pendant alarm and talking therapy and given details of relevant advice agencies.

A range of existing and new services were available to help and we referred people to the Southwark Council Covid Hub and a range of other sources of support (including local mutual aid groups, COPSINS partners' befriending and shopping services, and Age UK L&S' Food2You and the Handy Person schemes). Many people initially said they were fine, but subsequently got back to us to say they would value ongoing contact to help them deal with the practical and psychological impacts of the pandemic.

4.2. Emergency Relief

During the first lockdowns many older people could not leave their homes to access shopping etc., and a range of practical support services were quickly put in place. This involved working closely with the Southwark Council Covid response Hub, local foodbanks and others. Examples of the practical welfare provided by the Ageing Well Southwark partners include:

- Food parcel deliveries (including with donated foods and via local Foodbanks)
- Freshly cooked meal deliveries – including a range of additional support at Christmas as well as deliveries of freshly cooked and culturally appropriate meals for people to heat up at home. (This included Age UK L&S distributing 15,000 cooked meals during the first year of the pandemic. This service was not provided by or via Ageing Well – but is included to demonstrate that range of ways that the organisations involved were impacted by – and responded to – the unprecedented challenge of Covid19)
- Prescription and grocery pick up and deliveries
- Online and telephone-based benefits and welfare Information and Advice provision



Case Study: Female carer in her 60s, a registered with Southwark Carers and is the primary carer for her elderly mother. They have no other family or other means of support, were very proud and did not feel comfortable asking for any kind of assistance or help. The carer had taken also taken early retirement and was living on £34 a week with no other income or access to Wi-Fi or IT equipment. Her mother was also on a basic pension and had many health and mobility issues including signs of undiagnosed dementia,

As part of a support package we drew up a plan together of her priorities to put in for a carer and needs assessment, to have a benefit check and also helped her apply for a free travel card. We then went through different strategies enable her mother seen by a GP which was quite challenging as her mother had many fears of doctors and hospitals.

The outcomes were building a relationship of trust to support the carer and her mother to facilitate a visit a GP which then lead to a professional diagnosis of dementia, and other health conditions. A care plan was also put in place from the need's assessment for some occupational assistance and the service user was then able to get a wheelchair to be able to go out after being housebound for over 2 years. We were also able to put in a claim for attendance allowance and the carer was able to apply for carers allowance. We supported a change in energy and telephone provider for a cheaper tariff. And a further grant is being looked at for IT equipment. Our visits also helped with their social isolation including the social events provided by Southwark Carers.

"I'm so grateful for the support I have received form Southwark Carers!"

4.3. Befriending and Reducing Social Isolation

Whilst many people found ways to manage the practical problems caused by the pandemic and the associated lockdowns and restrictions, many older people and carers struggled to cope with the isolation, anxiety and stress that the situation caused. As a result, the COPSINS partners work to reduce social isolation became ever more important.

Blackfriars Settlement, Link Age Southwark and Time & Talents provide a comprehensive befriending offer via Ageing Well Southwark which usually involves volunteers visiting older people. As the pandemic restrictions kicked-in, they moved their befriending from being face-to-face to become telephone-based, and increased the numbers of befriending pairs they were able to support. As the restrictions changed over time, so did the befriending work – with volunteers starting to meet on their befrienders' doorsteps, sitting in the fresh air a few metres away before being able to meet in more traditional ways (with the use of LFT tests and vaccination checks etc).



All partners also adapted their planned group work and a wide range of existing and new services were delivered online. These included Southwark Carers' online salsa classes and Carers' Café and Southwark Pensioners Centre's Local History Group, Chi Kung classed and Southwark Pensioners Action Group (SPAG) meetings all moving online.

Along with the food deliveries, the partners also created and distributed activity packs for older people and their carers. These included recipes, poems, puzzles, mindfulness exercises and a range of useful tools to help isolated older people to maintain a sense of positivity and continue to feel valued and part of the wider community.

"Blackfriars' Sunday Lunch club means a great deal to me. I look forward to catching up with friendly people I meet regularly and welcome new who all comment on how welcoming everyone is and the lunch is very good. The volunteers are extremely kind and helpful, nothing is too much trouble for them to do for us. We are grateful and long may it continue."

Blackfriars Settlement

Case Study: Alice was referred to Time and Talents Neighbourhood Care almost 4 years ago to access our befriending service, as she had significant mobility impairment. We matched her to a befriender and they got along beautifully. When the befriender moved to Chicago, they continued fortnightly calls for the next two years until Alice's death. After Alice died, the befriender contacted T&T to express worry about Alice's husband Keith. Keith is totally blind, a bit deaf and has had a tracheotomy following a stroke. He is devastated and depressed following the loss of Alice. They did everything together: she was his eyes and he was her arms and legs. Although we initially supported Alice years ago, the links created through T&T ensured that Keith had someone he knows reaching out to him in a time of need. We aim to match Keith with an experienced volunteer who will go on walks with him.

4.4. Digital Divide

Helping older people to overcome the 'digital divide' is a key aim for the contract and the delivery partners and the Sub-Hubs were due to be hosting IT support sessions for older people to help them increase their confidence in getting online. However, when this support was most needed, most of the sub-Hubs' IT suites became unsafe for group work due to Covid so further innovation was required. Several partners received recycled smartphones and tablets (with data included) from donors, including Hubbub, and distributed these to isolated older people that we knew would not otherwise have access to the internet. The Ageing Well Handy Person service produced a guide to using these devices and, along with volunteers from GoodGym, delivered the devices and supported clients to learn how to use these.

The Enrick Lifelong Learning Project - We offer hourlong one to one sessions (AM) or computer club sessions (PM) Mondays and Wednesdays. Our new Getting Online Staying Online beginners and intermediate courses restart May 10 2022. There is a small fee for both.

"SPC has improved my life"

"I am more confident at using the internet than ever before"

Southwark Pensioners Centre



Research undertaken in 2021 by Age UK London on older Londoners' use of the internet during the pandemic, to which Age UK L&S contributed, showed that

- that the majority of those over 65 use the internet every day (60%) but this falls to 40% of over 75-year olds

- One in four of older Londoners over 65 would like to use the internet more
- Just 20% of people aged 75+ reported using the internet more during the pandemic
- Over 200,000 older Londoners over 75 do not use the internet at all

We noticed a huge difference in the experience of lockdowns for those who had access to the online world – enabling them to talk to their friends and families whilst being able to see their smiling faces, take part in exercise classes from home, manage online shopping and enjoy the range of mental stimulation that the internet offers. Having seen the physical and psychological impact of not having online access during lockdowns on older people and their carers in Southwark, we remain committed to finding new ways to address the digital divide and continue to look for new ways to improve older people's access to the online world.

THANK YOU

This report was drafted by Age UK Lewisham and Southwark. We would like to take this opportunity to thank the London Borough of Southwark for commissioning this service and working with us to support older people and their carers to engage with the quickly-changing landscape of services available to them. We are also grateful to Council colleagues who continue to support the delivery and evolution of the contract. We look forward to further developing our integrated teams at the central Hub and to delivering ever-more-seamless support for older people and their carers looking for a range of services, from activities that can help people to stay healthy, happy and independent, to the more complex and intensive support services that the Council and our NHS partners provide.

We are also incredibly grateful for all the work that the staff and volunteers of the COPSINS partners who continue to provide locally-rooted, innovative person-centred care for older people and carers in our borough.

April 2022