



Newsletter

September 2023



Read about our upcoming Drop-In Launch event, our new Cancer project, and our successful summer fundraising campaign! All this and more in the latest edition of Community Connections' newsletter!



~DROP-IN LAUNCH EVENT~

Join us next month at our special drop-in launch event!

When: 10:30am-12:30pm on Thursday 12th October

Where: Lewisham Irish Centre, Davenport Road, Catford SE6 2AZ

What: the perfect opportunity for residents and professionals alike to discover the growing network of organisations that now attend and together offer holistic support to isolated and vulnerable residents

All Lewisham residents 18+ welcome. Refreshments provided.

We hope to see you there!



COMMUNITY SERVICES DROP-INS
Launch Event

JOIN US FOR A FREE MORNING OF:

- INFORMATION & ADVICE ON LOCAL SERVICES
- TASTER SESSIONS WITH LOCAL GROUPS
- REFRESHMENTS

THURSDAY 12TH OCTOBER
10.30AM - 12.30PM
LEWISHAM IRISH CENTRE
2A DAVENPORT ROAD, SE6 2AZ
CALL US ON 0330 058 3464
FOR MORE INFORMATION

Lewisham Irish Community Centre
SOUTH EAST LONDON COMMUNITY ENERGY
Community Connections Lewisham
Community Connections Transport
Community Connections Befriending
LEWISHAM LOCAL
together FOR MENTAL WELLBEING
Change Grow Live
ageUK Lewisham & Southwark
brook

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS LEWISHAM IS A SERVICE RUN BY AGE UK LEWISHAM & SOUTHWARK CHARITY NUMBER 296862

Our drop-in has expanded...

The launch event not only marks our recent relocation to the Lewisham Irish Centre in the heart of Catford, but also celebrates the recent inclusion of several partner groups alongside our own team!

Thanks to the spacious building we now enjoy, we've been privileged to begin hosting regular information & support tables from a diverse mix of community organisations. Alongside those pictured below, we'll also have [Together for Wellbeing](#) (mental health), [Change Grow Live](#) (drug & alcohol support), and AGE UK led services such as low cost toenail cutting service [Happy Feet](#).



Explore local volunteering opportunities



Get expert, impartial advice on reducing your energy bills



Get information and advice about sexual health



Drawing all of these amazing groups together under one roof is great news for our attendees, enabling them to get help with multiple and interconnected support needs relating to issues like mental health, financial hardship, and employability.

Find out more about our Thursday drop-in [HERE](#).

~PROSTATE CANCER PROJECT~ LAUNCHED

A new initiative, known as the *Prostate Cancer Treatment Pathway Project*, launched earlier this month, offering tailored support to adult Lewisham residents receiving treatment for prostate cancer. Under the leadership of our new Cancer Project Worker Becca, the project will see Community Connections support 15 patients over an 8-month period, involving regular one to one check-ins, signposting, and the building of a patient-led peer support group.

We hope through this project to facilitate a meaningful, supportive community amongst fellow participants; one in which they feel empowered to improve their own health and wellbeing, and their chances of recovery. To do this we will ensure they have the freedom to shape their peer support group in a way that best serves their practical and emotional needs, whilst offering all the usual support and information that Community Connections provides.

MEET BECCA



'As a Lewisham resident myself, I am so looking forward to connecting with other residents and supporting them during their cancer treatment pathway. I know from my own experience of supporting a loved one through cancer treatment what an overwhelming, scary, and isolating experience it can be, and truly believe in the healing power of connection and community. In particular, I look forward to supporting patients in creating the Peer Support Group and fostering a welcoming, safe, compassionate community'

How do I take part or find out more?

If you would like to refer yourself or somebody you support then please complete our online referral form [HERE](#).

**If you are unsure if this is the right project for you then you can let us know on the form and we will be happy to send you further information.*

Alternatively, you can find out more and request a referral through our usual contact channels (phone, email or at our Thursday morning drop-in) listed at the bottom of this newsletter.

~SUMMER FESTIVALS~ FUNDRAISING SUCCESS

Another summer has flown by, and our team had great fun leading our outreach stalls over five community festivals. The weather may have been hit and miss but the local community vibes were unfailingly warm. We're thankful to all the residents, young and old and in between, who stopped by to share their stories and give their views on Lewisham, both on what they love and what they'd like to see more of.



Team photo at Hilly Fields Midsummer Fayre, 24th June

Like the summer before, it was a great opportunity to connect personally with new service users and their loved ones, attract future volunteers, and discover more inspiring organisations across the borough!

Over £700 raised to support our Befriending project!



This summer we made a concerted effort to build further upon last year's fundraising campaign, this time reaching out far and wide across our community for donations of unused gift donations to use as prizes. Through fun activities like our tombola, kid's treasure hunt and Age UK raffle, **we raised a total of £744!**

We'd like to extend a massive heartfelt thank you to all the local businesses, community partners and individuals who made this generously donated prizes..

THANK YOU!

Blackheath Bootcamp, Broadway Café, Catford Mews, Forest London, Gail's Bakery Blackheath, Lewisham Local, Lewisham Toy Library, Lewisham Pop Up, London & Rye Wetherspoons, Neals Yard, Waterstones Blackheath, Pet's Corner Blackheath.....and all the individual residents, staff members and volunteers who donated!



~SUPPORT OUR BEFRIENDING~ PROJECT

All the money raised through our summer festival stalls will help fund our volunteer-led befriending service [Community Connections Befriending](#), a vital yet under-resourced provision across the borough.

Through recruiting and training a diverse pool of local volunteers, we coordinate weekly befriending support, both over the telephone and through face-to-face meet ups, for some of the loneliest and most isolated adults in Lewisham. The amount we raised will in fact cover the cost of training 40 new volunteers and facilitating 26 outings between volunteers and their befriendees!

The project still needs a lot more support, though. *Could you help?*



GIVE

Any donations received will be used to sustain our befriending project and can be made through our Just Giving page [HERE](#)

VOLUNTEER WITH US

Could you or someone you know spare an hour or more each week to support an isolated resident? The demand for befrienders still far outweighs the supply, so we'd love to hear from you!

To apply or just find out more please head to our website [Befriender Application form](#)

~DOWNHAM DOOR KNOCK~ REPORT

Back in May we led a door knocking campaign targeted at residents of North Downham, Lewisham's largest ward yet one that continues to experience high levels of deprivation and a relative shortage of community groups and services.



Working with 17 other organisations we knocked on 1,154 doors and managed to chat with 152 households, asking open questions about what they enjoy doing socially, and what they'd like to see more of in their local area.

Read about the results here:

[Downham Door Knock Report](#)

~CONNECT WITH CCL~

GET IN TOUCH

You can get in touch with us by calling our main helpline on **0330 0583 464**, open Monday-Friday from 9:30am-4pm, except on Thursdays (our drop-in day) when our line is open from 2-4pm only.

You can also visit us at our free **Weekly Drop-In**, held each **Thursday 10:30am-12:30pm** at Lewisham Irish Community Centre, 2A Davenport Road, London SE6 2AZ.

Find out what services are available in Lewisham for a particular support need - Online Community Directory

Our range of helpful factsheets are freely available to view and/or download from our **website** ('Community Directory' menu heading). These are updated regularly and include *Financial Hardship, Employment Support, Community Transport, Digital Support and Mental Health Support*.

Want regular E-mail updates about local groups and services?

To receive regular updates about social groups, activities and support services around the borough, please sign up to our **Community Development Worker's mailing list** by dropping a quick email to michael.stuart@ageuklands.org.uk

GIVE

Any donations we receive will help us expand our outreach to isolated residents and sustain vital services like our Drop-in and volunteer-led projects. Please visit our website **DONATION PAGE** where you can find out more and support our campaign.

THANK YOU