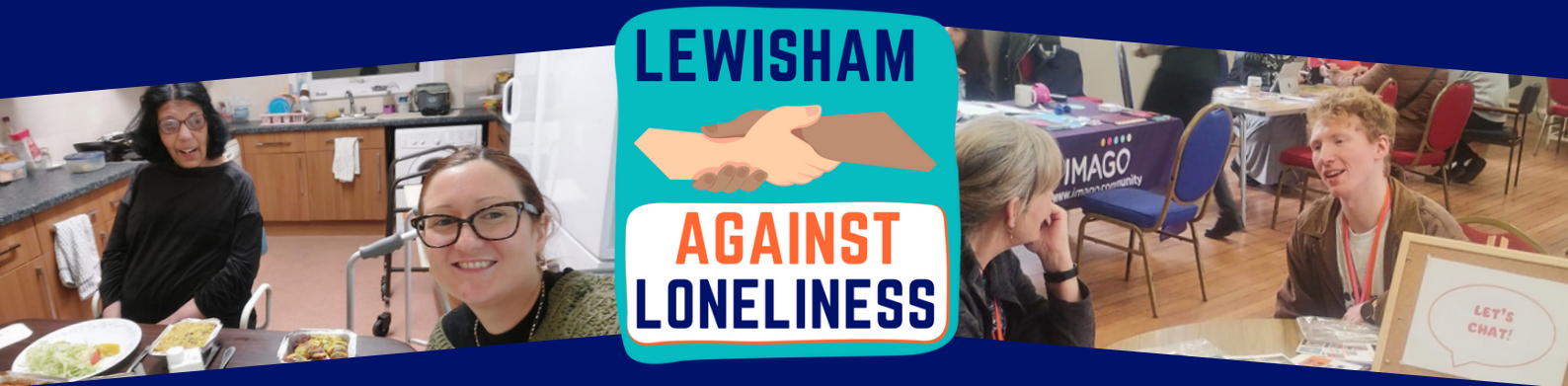


CCL Newsletter March 2024

In our latest Newsletter we bring you news of our winter campaign 'Lewisham Against Loneliness', our Prostate Cancer project, and more!

SERVICE UPDATES



From December until the end of February, our Lewisham Against Loneliness campaign illuminated the problem of loneliness, its different forms and causes, and its negative health effects among the residents we support.

More positively, we celebrated the positive impact of volunteer-led Befriending and Social Prescribing in alleviating the problem, with a particular emphasis on fundraising and volunteer recruitment for our own [Community Connections Befriending](#) service. Take a look at some of our **campaign highlights** below!

Fundraising Success!



Alice, Leanne, and Anna making fundraising look like a piece of cake at our Laurence House Bake Sale!

Through our bake sale, our Age UK winter raffle, and our Just Giving donation page we raised a whopping **£1,711!**

All proceeds will go towards our Befriending service, which recruits, trains, and matches local volunteers with lonely and isolated residents in need of a friendly weekly chat.

Drop-In Befriending Event



On 29th February we held our **Lewisham Community Fayre** at the Lewisham Irish Centre, a special event for both our Befriendees and our wonderful team of volunteer Befrienders!

A morning of mingling, refreshments, and taster activities, it was a chance for those present to make new connections and chat face to face with a number of helpful partner services, including St Christopher's Hospice, Lewisham Local, the DWP, and our Age UK Information & Advice team.



Meet Patrick

From loneliness to volunteer of the year!

During the campaign we had the pleasure of chatting with Patrick, a former CCL service user and now one of our most longstanding volunteer Befrienders.

Patrick's life changed dramatically after losing his sight completely in 2004. With his career at an end and a sudden reliance on community transport schemes, he fell into what he calls 'a dark place'; a long spell of loneliness in which he became increasingly isolated from friends and local activities.

Things began to improve after he was referred to our service in 2013, providing a springboard for his amazing journey out of loneliness. He discovered and joined new social groups, building his confidence and even starting his own group for visually impaired men.

It was whilst using our transport service that he was encouraged to volunteer as a Befriender. 'I'll give it a try, why not!?' he said, and he's never looked back since. He's now been volunteering with our service for the past six years and currently phones 7 lonely residents a week! No wonder then that he won our 'Outstanding Volunteer Award' last year! Read the full story on our [website News Page](#).

"Patrick is a life saver; he really brings me out of my shell"
~Befriender



Watch our videos!

Throughout the campaign we used our social media to share several new videos exploring loneliness. Click on the icons below to watch!



The Loneliest Whale

Discover the significance of the whale as a symbol for loneliness, and see how our weekly drop-in regulars created a beautiful mural exploring the question 'What does social connection mean to you?' (2 part video)



BBC One Interview

Watch our special feature on BBC Morning Live, where service user Ron and his volunteer Befriender John talk about their experiences of loneliness and the positive impact Befriending has had on them both.



Buddies 4 All Interview

Our two-part interview with 'Buddies for All' founder David Bourroughs explores the impact of loneliness and social isolation on the disabled community, and how the service tackles this through volunteer-led buddying support.

Ways you can still support the campaign..

Volunteer

Can you spare 1 hour a week to provide some friendly company to a lonely person? Find out more and apply via our

[Volunteer Application Form](#)

Donate

Help support our Befriending service by:

➔ Donating to our [Just Giving page](#)

➔ Buying a Whale Badge (£5)



Now available at our Laurence House office and all upcoming outreach events!

Prostate Cancer Project

Our recently launched [Prostate Cancer project](#) has been building momentum since the autumn, reaching new beneficiaries through local outreach, and recently securing further Health Inequalities funding that will sustain the project until at least September!

One to one support

Our Project Cancer Worker is here to provide ongoing one to one support to any adult Lewisham resident with Lived Experience of Prostate Cancer. At present there is **no waiting list** for this support, which includes weekly check in calls and helpful signposting to relevant services across the borough.

Make an online referral [HERE](#) for anyone you know or support anyone who would benefit.



Becca (Cancer Project Worker) and Caroline (Social Prescribing Manager) at our recent Prostate Cancer Awareness event, held on 13th March at Glass Mill Leisure Centre

Join our monthly Peer Support Group

Since opening on 13th December, our monthly peer support group has been running in conjunction with our one to one support service, and increasingly well attended by residents with Lived Experience of Prostate Cancer.

Taking place on the 2nd Wednesday of each month at the [Glass Mill Leisure Centre](#) in Lewisham (2-4pm), the group is co-led by Cancer Don't Let it Win and offers free refreshments and delicious Caribbean food from Cummin' Up. The next meeting will take place on **Wednesday 10th April**.



Jeff from **Cancer Don't Let It Win**, who co-leads the Support Group

PROSTATE CANCER SUPPORT GROUP

JOIN OUR MONTHLY GROUP MEETINGS

Our support groups offer a **supportive** and understanding environment where participants can **connect** with others and share their experiences, find encouragement, **share** coping strategies, receive **emotional support** and access helpful information

WHO
Our group is open to all individuals and families affected by prostate cancer

WHEN
We meet on the 2nd Wednesday of the month from 2pm-4pm

WHERE
Glass Mill Leisure Centre, 41 Loampit Vale, SE13 7FT

FIND OUT MORE

www.cancerdontletitwin.org
info@cancerdontletitwin.org

0333 3355 916
0330 0593 464 (CCL)

CDLW
CANCER DON'T LET IT WIN
PROSTATE CANCER SUPPORT GROUP

Community Connections Lewisham

Community Connections Lewisham is a service run by Age UK Lewisham & Southwark, charity number 298862

REFERRALS UPDATE

Thanks to our dedicated, fully staffed frontline team we now have one of our shortest ever waiting times!

Refer a Lewisham resident (aged 18+) today for up to 8 weeks of person-centred support, and our team will begin supporting them within 2 weeks.

We have a Community Facilitator for each of Lewisham's four neighbourhoods, ensuring our service users benefit from up-to-date, specialised knowledge about their particular patch of the borough!

Make a referral:

Fill in our [online referral form](#)

Phone our team on 0330 0583 464

Email communityconnections@ageuklands.org.uk



How we can support you..

Our team can:

- ✓ Provide person-centred support with finding local groups and activities e.g. exercise classes, lunch clubs, educational courses, befriending services, IT groups
- ✓ Accompany you on your first visit to a new group
- ✓ Help you find local support services and make appropriate referrals e.g. foodbank, advocacy, financial advice, mental health services
- ✓ Complete a community transport application with you
- ✓ Help you understand a letter or physically assist you with completing simple forms

Our team cannot:

- ✗ Provide housing advice
- ✗ Support you through a mental health crisis (we can signpost or refer you to organisations that can help)
- ✗ Carry out a benefits check or advise you on how to complete benefits application forms
- ✗ Arrange personal assistance or carer support

WEEKLY DROP-IN UPDATE

Chat face to face with the DWP



We're pleased to confirm that the DWP are now regularly attending our [weekly drop-in](#), offering tailored support to residents experiencing financial difficulties who need expert advice and support around benefits and pensions.

Members of their team are currently able to join us on a fortnightly basis, offering face to face appointments on a first come first served basis (no advance booking required).



STAFF UPDATE

Next month we bid farewell to two longstanding members of our team, both of whom have made vital contributions to our service. We thank them both and wish them all the very best as they move on to their new roles.

Alice Groux

~Chief Operating Officer~



Since joining as a Community Development Worker in 2018, Alice has given 6 years of loyal service to our team, championing the message of social prescribing across the borough, managing staff, and securing long-term funding for our crucial work to continue. You are all invited to Alice's leaving drinks, **Thursday 4th April** from 17:30pm at the [Catford Constitutional](#)

Michael Stuart

~Community Development Worker~



For the past four years Michael has passionately supported community growth in Lewisham, riding around on his trustee red bicycle supporting local voluntary groups to get off the ground, publicise, and sustain themselves, as well as leading innovate projects such as the Downham Door Knock. You are all invited to Michael's leaving drinks, **Thursday 25th April** from 17:00pm at the [Ninth Life pub](#).

Get in touch

Tel: 0330 0583 464

Email: communityconnections@ageuklands.org.uk

www.communityconnectionslewisham.org

Request a presentation for your group: please email us and our team would be happy to visit and present our service!