2016 – Our Year in Numbers¹

- 3384 driving and escorted shopping trips
- 20 groups, meeting 587 times over the year
- 388 dedicated volunteers
- 17,000 hours of volunteering
- 565 older people supported
  - 21% over 90
  - 65% over 80
- 54 gardening and DIY jobs
- 50 new older people joined us
- 2 groups for people with dementia
- 6 local schools supporting us
- over 110 befriending matches

¹These are our figures for the financial year ended 31st March 2016
We have had another hugely successful year working with people of all ages to build a stronger, age-friendly Southwark in which older people can thrive. In October 2015, we relaunched with a fabulous new name and tagline, which showcases who we are and what we do. We have been delighted with how much support there has been for us under our new name – with more new volunteers and community partners than ever before.

Over the year, our staff and volunteers have had a huge impact on reducing loneliness and isolation in our neighbourhoods, providing opportunities for our older neighbours to meet new people, develop new interests, and exercise and socialise with others inside and outside their homes. We continued to invest in making sure we are having the greatest possible positive impact in our local community. In the last year we have rolled out a new database, which has enabled us to cleanse and sort our records, implemented our strong monitoring and evaluation tools and made significant upgrades to our IT systems. We are proud to have received the Southwark Stars Award for Best Impact Measurement in March 2016, in recognition of the work that we do.

For 23 years, we have rooted our work in the local community. We certainly couldn’t achieve all that we do without our valued community partners – from the older people who come to our groups, inspire people in local schools, develop friendships with younger neighbours and contribute so much to their neighbourhoods; to the members of our Patrons scheme; the local schools, businesses, churches and charities which provide us with venues for our popular activity groups; to all of our donors, fundraisers and supporters; and, of course, our committed volunteers who drive, garden, fix, befriend and run our activity groups. We know that what we do makes a huge difference to older people’s quality of life, and that our model continues to deliver great positive change. Together we achieve so much to make Southwark a place where older people can thrive and lead happier, healthier lives.

We look forward to working with even more local friends and neighbours in the coming year, as we reduce waiting lists, recruit more volunteers and support ever-more older people to thrive in their local community. We hope that you will join us.
Who we are

Link Age Southwark is a vibrant local charity with an impressive track record of improving older people’s lives and combating loneliness and isolation. We recruit, train and manage volunteers to deliver services to people across the London borough of Southwark. Our work improves people’s quality of life, their physical and mental health, and enables older people to live independently in their own homes for as long as possible.

Volunteers are the lifeblood of our organisation and, together with a small staff team, we have been making Southwark a better place for older people since 1993. We pride ourselves on being the best that we can, remaining ahead of the curve and being a small charity which punches above its weight to deliver positive change in, and with, our local community.

Link Age Southwark

- Was founded 23 years ago as two separate charities (Dulwich Helpline and Southwark Churches Care, which merged in 2012)
- Had 388 active volunteers in 2015/16
- Supported 565 older people in 2015/16

Our services are free to everyone over 60 who lives in the Borough of Southwark and our volunteers come from Southwark and beyond.
What we do

Our work alleviates loneliness and isolation, brings members of our community together, improves older people’s health and wellbeing and helps to create a stronger, happier and healthier society.

Last year, we supported an impressive 565 older people. We linked over 110 older people with volunteer befrienders; organised 20 social and activity groups that meet regularly in the community; worked with local schools to deliver innovative inter-generational activities; provided a volunteer gardening and odd-job service; and coordinated our volunteer drivers who escort older people to activities outside the home. We continued to deliver friendly services for people with mild-moderate dementia and their carers and worked hard to make Southwark a dementia-friendly and an age-friendly Borough.

How we work:

- We receive referrals from GPs, other health professionals, social workers, charities, older people themselves, and from their friends and family.
- Our team of experienced staff assess older people in their own homes and link them to appropriate services provided by Link Age Southwark and other local providers.
- We provide a volunteer befriending service, matching isolated older people with a friendly, trained volunteer to visit them once a week.
- In 2016, we ran 20 regular activity groups in community settings, ranging from Bridge to Yoga, from Singing to Reminiscence and much more.
- We provide transport wherever we can to make sure older people can access activities outside their homes.
- We work with local schools, linking generations together to develop new knowledge, events and skills.
- We provide practical support such as light gardening or helping with odd jobs in the home, enabling people to live independently in their own homes for as long as possible.
- We have a specific programme of support for people with a recent diagnosis of dementia, including peer support and reading groups and a support group for the family carers of people who have dementia.
- We have developed a new telephone befriending service to complement our existing services.

We couldn’t achieve what we do without our dedicated volunteers!
**Why we are needed**

Southwark is a flourishing London borough with a growing population. The need for Link Age Southwark’s services is greater now than ever:

- 10% of older people are in contact with friends, family or neighbours less than once a month
- Lonely people are at greater risk of serious physical and mental health problems and are more likely to visit their GP, fall, enter residential or nursing care early and use A&E independent of chronic illness
- Southwark is the 12th most deprived of London’s 32 Boroughs
- Southwark’s older population ranks 6th most deprived out of 326 Local Authorities

Fortunately for Link Age Southwark, the diverse, growing, local population also means there are more people with valuable skills and experience who can volunteer with us and connect with older people in their local community.

**The difference that we make**

We pride ourselves on being a local charity that takes monitoring and evaluating the impact of what we do very seriously. We have clear goals and we use a range of tools to measure the changes we achieve through our work.

Our latest user survey demonstrated that, as a result of using our services, people feel less lonely; meet new people; take part in new activities; find new interests and skills; are better able to manage their homes and gardens; are more aware of useful services; feel more positive; are more active; and enjoy life more. These are results that we are proud of!

Link Age Southwark supported 565 older people in 2016 with an average age of 83. 92% of them are very happy or happy with our services overall (with a further 7% saying they were neither happy nor unhappy). 93% of older people are either happy or very happy with their befriending visits and 90% of our service users find our newsletters useful. 95% of attendees at our activity groups reported increased social interaction and 92% reported increased energy. Survey respondents put in their own words the difference Link Age Southwark makes to their lives.

“Your services stop people becoming isolated”

“It’s improved the quality of my life…. with friendship I’m not so lonely now”

“It keeps me motivated and active”

“It makes a big difference meeting different people and making new friends”
Daphne’s story*

Daphne, 86, is a retired primary school teacher who is widowed and has three children who live in France, Florida and Scotland. She moved into supported housing in 2012, when her failing eyesight became a problem. Daphne takes part in Link Age Southwark’s weekly reminiscence group led by Lucy, a volunteer.

“I’ve been part of the reminiscence group since I moved in here and I love it. There are 10 of us including the volunteers and we can hardly fit another person round the dining room table! The group starts at ten o’clock with a cup of coffee and cake or biscuits and we go on until about ten to 12. We all share our memories, and the fact that we have different things to contribute is part of it. Lucy is amazing at making sure everyone is involved.

I can’t say enough about Lucy, she’s an absolute sweetie. She gives us a list at the start of every term showing what we’ll be discussing every week and the topics are very well chosen – everything from My Favourite Lesson at School to My Worst Holiday Ever.

You have to do a little bit of homework in your mind the night before, to think what you’ll say or bring along. Last Wednesday the topic was Our Favourite Flowers and such a lot came out of it. Lucy brought in some wonderful books. She’s got an amazing collection of back up books for all topics. In a few weeks time, someone from Dulwich Picture Gallery is coming to talk to us. I painted for years and I love anything in the art world, so I’m looking forward to that.

I sometimes worry about forgetting things, especially when I’m tired, but the conversation we have stirs up all sorts of memories. The volunteers really are tremendous. I feel very lucky to be involved.”

*some names have been changed in this report
May’s Story

May, 98, grew up in Bermondsey and moved to East Dulwich in the 1960s. She was widowed at 65. She has a son who lives in Australia, a daughter who lives in Kent and many grandchildren and great grandchildren.

“I can’t remember how I learned of Link Age Southwark, but I was 85 when I joined. At the time I’d been saying to my son-in-law that I was bored and he said I was probably lonely. He said “if you weren’t lonely, you wouldn’t be bored!”

One of the staff came to see me and asked me what I was interested in. I said I loved playing cards and although there wasn’t a card group, she soon set one up! She said we’d be playing bridge, which I hadn’t played before, but they arranged for us to have a volunteer tutor. I still go every other Thursday to the bridge group and I thoroughly enjoy it. One of the volunteers gives me a lift there. I feel very, very fortunate.

I’m not someone who can just sit around all day. By going to bridge I’ve met some wonderful friendly people. We phone each other and people are so kind. I have age-related macular degeneration and recently I found I couldn’t see the cards. I thought I might have to give up, but one of the people we play with bought some big cards so that I could still play. I was so thrilled.

Sometimes people are too unwell to come, but we usually get a couple of tables. There are two other ladies there who are over 90. We have a cup of tea and a biscuit half way through the session but we don’t stop playing!

I also go to a group that meets for lunch at a local pub. I get a lift there too. There are usually 9 or 10 of us. Everyone is very friendly and the lasagne is absolutely beautiful! I feel extremely lucky and I’m very grateful to Link Age Southwark for bringing joy to my life.”
Working towards a dementia-friendly Southwark

In 2016, we continued to work closely with partners across Southwark to make our local communities dementia-friendly. Our Director, Gemma Juma, chaired the Southwark Dementia Action Alliance, supporting businesses, charities and public sector organisations to make local services and spaces more open and welcoming to people with dementia and their carers.

We know that people with dementia are at greater risk of isolation and loneliness, and our services are specifically designed to support people to lead full and active lives in the often anxious months and years following a diagnosis. Last year, all our staff underwent Dementia Friends training, which we also offered to all our volunteers. We continue to champion full and active lives for people with dementia.

Over the year, with the benefit of funding from the City Bridge Trust, we:

- Supported 65 older people with a diagnosis of dementia
- Supported 26 befriending relationships involving people with mild-moderate dementia
- Delivered a fortnightly reading group and a peer support group
- Provided escorted transport to our groups for people who lack the confidence, or the physical ability, to travel to them independently
- Introduced a telephone befriending service for carers of people with dementia
- Worked with the Alzheimer’s Society to provide an information and support group for the family carers of people with dementia.
Spotlight on our Peer Support Group for people with dementia

We started our dementia peer support group in early 2014 when we became aware of local demand for activities tailored to people with mild-moderate dementia. Peer support is one way people can be supported following a dementia diagnosis. Our group helps people be there for each other and learn how to live with and manage their dementia. Attendees at our group take part in varied activities and games, including memory specific and advice activities. We are very fortunate to have received a donation from the Peckham and Dulwich Rotary Club enabling us to buy six tablet computers which the group uses to access information, paint pictures, make pottery and have all sorts of fun.

The Health Innovation Network in South London recently carried out a social return on investment (SROI) study of our peer support group, using methodology approved by the New Economics Foundation. The study confirmed that our peer group delivers the following outcomes for 100% of attendees with dementia:

- A reduction in isolation and loneliness
- A feeling of stimulation, including memory stimulation, more than if people remained at home
- An increase in wellbeing from having a sense of purpose and enjoying their time at the group

The study also found that:

- 100% of carers whose loved ones attend the group experience a reduction in stress and the burden of care.

The report provided additional evidence that our group offers good value for money and creates positive social value for people with dementia above and beyond the cost of investment.

In another independent study, participants told us that they feel more cheerful after attending the group and that the things they enjoy most about the group are:

- the general discussions and informality of the group;
- the company; and
- the opportunity to meet familiar faces and get out of the house.
People regularly tell us what a difference our groups make to their lives:
“I loved your group - it was so lovely, we had a real laugh”
“Mum hasn’t stopped talking about the group since she got home”
“This is the only thing I do all week”
“I like meeting new people”

Robert, Alan and John

Robert, 53, lives in Battersea. He has been volunteering with Link Age Southwark for the past year as a befriender to Alan, who has dementia and to John, who has Parkinson’s disease.

“I usually see John on Tuesdays and Alan on Wednesdays. John and I talk about everyday topics and about things that have happened in the past. He always likes to give me a snack and a drink which he makes himself.

I did some dementia training with Link Age Southwark before I started visiting Alan which was very, very helpful. I hadn’t met anyone with dementia before, but the support I received made me feel confident, which surprised me. If I hadn’t had the training, it would have been a different story altogether, I think.

Alan’s a really nice chap. Sometimes he’ll tell me the same thing week in, week out, but I don’t mind. He has a brilliant memory for some things. I bought a bike recently and he always asks me how I’m getting on with it. Sometimes when I visit I’ll help him find something he’s lost, and sometimes I remind him to leave his keys or other important things in a certain place so they’re easier to find - little things like that. During the summer I go in the garden with him as well - we have a little walk around.

John and Alan both appreciate my company and the chance to talk to somebody. When I see Alan he always says how glad he is to see me. He has a carer and there are staff in his sheltered accommodation who he sees on a regular basis, but he just wants someone to talk to who is there for him and isn’t in a rush. He always says thanks for coming and that he looks forward to my visits. I look forward to them as well.”
Working with our partners to put older people first

Link Age Southwark is committed to working closely in partnership with others to make Southwark a better place for older people. We work with local businesses, charities, community groups, housing providers, the NHS and Southwark Council whenever we have an opportunity to do so.

We are a proud member of COPSINS, the Consortium of Older People’s Services in Southwark, which has been working together since 2012 to ensure that older people can access services which help improve their quality of life, support their independence and promote their wellbeing. We work with our COPSINS partners – Age UK Lewisham and Southwark, the Alzheimer’s Society, Blackfriars Settlement, Southwark Pensioners Centre and Time and Talents – to deliver high quality services, to share expertise and best practice and to have the greatest possible positive impact on older people’s lives.

We are also a member of the Campaign to End Loneliness, which is a network of organisations and people working together to ensure that loneliness is acted upon as a public health priority at local and national levels.

Link Age Southwark was born out of the merger of two COPSINS partners - Dulwich Helpline and Southwark Churches Care - and we continue to strive to make sure that we avoid duplication with other charities, make every penny work as hard as it can, put the needs of older people first, and ensure that our work brings the maximum possible benefit to as many people as possible.

Befriending

Over the last year, we supported over 110 befriending relationships. Combined, our befriending volunteers gave over 10,500 hours of their time, enriching their own lives as well as those of the people they visited.

93% of people who have a befriender are either happy or very happy with the service. Our befriending volunteers visit an older person in their own home once a week for a chat, outings or focused activities like playing games or reading newspapers. Befriending is central to the work we do and has significant impact on the wellbeing, physical and mental health of both befriender and befriended. Many older people who have a volunteer visitor from Link Age Southwark tell us that without a befriender they would experience long periods of isolation, loneliness and social exclusion, which we know impact negatively on people’s immediate and long-term health and wellbeing.

There is a growing body of evidence which formally recognises what we at Link Age Southwark have known for a long time: Befriending is a hugely valuable and cost-effective intervention through which the local community comes together to improve the lives of their older neighbours. We have long known, too, that volunteers, as well as the older people they visit, benefit from befriending.

93% of people who have a befriender are either happy or very happy with the service.
Shenley and Betty

Shenley, 40, was born in South Africa, has lived in South London for the past eight years and began visiting Betty three years ago.

“I wanted to become a befriender because of my South African grandmother, who I’m very close to. She’s a very young 93 year old and I’m sure that’s because she has the luxury of having a big family around her and people who visit her all the time. I wanted to make sure that someone else had a person to chat to on a regular basis.

Betty is such an interesting person. I go round there every Monday after work and she furnishes me with lovely cups of tea and a piece of cake every time. She’s amazing, she really is. She’s travelled and lived in all sorts of places and has really fascinating stories to tell - lots of life experiences. It’s always been an easy flow of conversation.

Another big part of why I go to visit her is to read her post and write bits and pieces for her because she’s lost her sight. She remembers everybody’s birthdays so there are always cards to be written. She also loves finding out what I’ve been up to, so I share my week with her. It’s so refreshing not to talk about the pressures of work or my busy day, but just to go and have a real chit chat with someone. It’s really lovely. Nothing else in my week matches it!”

Betty, 86, a retired primary school teacher, spent 27 years in Nigeria. Betty’s husband died 11 years ago and her three sons live overseas. She has severe arthritis and macular degeneration which make it difficult for her to leave the house.

“Shenley’s an absolutely delightful person. She gives me practical help and we also have a laugh.

It was my GP who put me in touch with Link Age Southwark and I immediately liked the idea. I couldn’t see, I couldn’t read, I couldn’t write cards and I’m a person who keeps in touch with people. I used to use the computer for emails but I can’t do that any more because I have no middle vision.

Shenley gives me practical help. She does all my cards for me and reads. If I need an envelope addressing, I know she’ll do it for me.

And of course, somebody coming in is wonderful. I love it. I’m a social animal. I really enjoy company because I’ve been used to it all my life. In Nigeria we were very, very sociable!

You people at Link Age Southwark are wonderful. It’s a really successful idea. If I’d known about it when I was a bit younger I’d have volunteered myself.”
Gwen and Janet

Gwen, 84, was born in Lambeth, moved to Peckham in the early 1960s and has lived in Nunhead for the past 20 years. She has eight children and a foster child. Gwen has limited mobility and was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s several years ago. She lives alone, has a carer three times a day and Janet, a befriender from Link Age Southwark, visits her one afternoon every week.

“It was the hospital that put me in touch with Link Age Southwark. I’d been worried about my memory for a long while. You know, you just forget things and you brush it aside. Anyway, they wrote and asked if I’d like someone to visit me.

I don’t really get out now and although some of my family are around and about, they’re busy and they’re working so they can’t always find the time. I do get lonely and upset but it makes such a difference to know Janet is coming. We have a laugh. We sit down and we talk about different things... the old days...what we’re going to do. Sometimes we listen to old music - that can fetch back things that happened to you at the time. I can remember some things so clearly, like my first job when I was 14. I look forward to her coming here. It’s company, somebody different. It’s like our own little club!”

Janet, a retired doctor, has lived in the area for the past 35 years. She’s been visiting Gwen for about six months.

“Becoming a befriender appealed to me because it was something local, something interesting and I like talking to people. When I volunteered I was asked if I’d be interested in visiting people with dementia and I said that would be fine. My mother has very advanced Alzheimer’s so I’ve been through it all from a personal perspective with her. I did a dementia training session and wheelchair training with Link Age Southwark, which were useful.

I enjoy coming and having a chat with Gwen, hearing about her memories. Gwen knows a lot of local people and there’s certainly no shortage of conversation. We talk about the old days, the new days, what we’re going to do...We put the world to rights. We’ve also been doing something called Music Mirrors together. It’s been devised for people at the early stages of Alzheimer’s and is a way to talk about memories associated with music. The plan is that if your memory worsens your family can use particular tunes to jog your memory about certain times in your life.

Volunteering is such a sociable thing to do and I feel like I’m doing something useful.”

Intergenerational activities

We have long-established relationships with several local schools in Southwark. Last year, pupils from six schools supported our work by fundraising, volunteering at our groups and in our office, as well as running our ever-popular computer classes. The Charter School hosted a spring party for over 50 Link Age Southwark members and carers, and pupils from six schools raised over £2000 for us by performing at a Jazz evening hosted by James Allen’s Girls’ School (JAGS).
A focus on digital skills

We know how important digital skills can be for accessing services, which increasingly require interaction with technology. At Link Age Southwark, we have invested heavily in our own digital technology over the last year, upgrading our database, improving our e-mail and file-sharing systems, increasing our use of social media, and buying equipment to use our donated tablet computers at activity groups. At the same time, we have ensured that older people are provided with opportunities to improve their own digital skills. Of the 6.4 million adults who don’t use the internet, more than 75% of them are over 65.

Link Age Southwark offers two computer groups in partnership with local schools whose students volunteer to help older people develop their digital skills. The JAGS group began in 2007 and is run by sixth form volunteers, and the Alleyn’s group began in 2013 and is run by students from Year 10. In both groups, older participants are matched up with a student to work with them every week.

Attendees at the groups, which always welcome new members, explain the benefits of attending:

Joyce, 86, likes the computer lessons as she loves learning and doesn’t want to be left behind. “I want to keep up with the flowing river of inventions and with new things in life.”

John, 67, says that the group he attends is very enjoyable. “The younger generation help the older with their knowledge of computers. We didn’t have these things when we were younger.”

Joe, 72, has found the classes very helpful as he is an amateur photographer. “The young pupils have shown me how to download photos from my camera to the computer and manipulate the images. These classes have given me the confidence to try what I have learned at home and they also help foster good inter-generational relations.”

Fauzia, 72, says “It’s good to meet up with young people and also improve our knowledge of computers. I have learned how to shop on-line which is very helpful as I can’t always get out to the shops.”

Pat, 81, has enjoyed the class too. “The youngsters have been very patient with me as I want to keep in touch with friends and relatives in South Africa and Australia. Thank you for helping me!”
Last year, we ran 20 regular groups across Southwark in community settings. We partner with others across the Borough to deliver groups in venues which are local to attendees, which is what people tell us they want. Groups are run by our dedicated volunteers who receive universal praise in evaluations for what they do.

In the last year, groups have met regularly in sheltered housing, health centres, libraries, community centres, places of worship, pubs and in local schools. We endeavour to provide transport whenever we can, and use a combination of dedicated volunteer drivers, a wheel-chair accessible community minibus from the Ashton Edwards Trust, the Time and Talents minibus and paid escorts to our groups for people with dementia. **Transport is one of our biggest costs, but without it, the majority of our groups’ attendees wouldn’t be able to get to our groups. We aim to keep costs down wherever we can by recruiting and supporting our wonderful team of volunteer drivers.**

Each of our groups is evaluated every two years. In our last independent reviews almost every single attendee...
was happy or very happy with the group they attend. 95% of group members reported increased social interaction as a result of the groups; 92% reported increased energy.

Group evaluations confirm that our work:
- reduces isolation and loneliness
- improves older people’s physical and mental health
- improves older people’s quality of life.

Attendees tell us that they want more! More groups, more meetings, and more transport to enable them to take part in activities outside their own homes. We are planning new groups and hope to continue to expand our services to meet this demand.

Friendly local exercise groups for older people

There is much evidence that older people who exercise regularly are healthier and less likely to develop serious long-term conditions than those who don’t. Exercise can also improve muscle strength and tone, making it less likely that people will have an accident or a fall that could lead to injury. Regular exercise also helps people maintain independent lives, can help memory and improves people’s wellbeing and self-esteem.

Link Age Southwark runs several free exercise groups in the Borough. Our seated yoga group has been meeting in a sheltered housing unit in East Dulwich since 2007. The group brings together people of varying ages and physical ability, who all enjoy the benefits of an hour’s seated yoga. The group is led by an attentive and much appreciated professional yoga tutor, who has worked with the group since its inception.

Before each class starts, participants enjoy a cuppa and a chat together, courtesy of the group’s trusty volunteer.

In a recent independent evaluation, members’ feedback was resoundingly positive. As well as fulfilling a clear social function, members derive considerable health and wellbeing benefits from taking part. Everyone reported that attending the group was an opportunity to meet people and make friends, with participants explaining that in addition to their interest in the exercise per se, they had started going to the group to enjoy the company of others, get out of the house and do something different.

Attendees reported increased energy levels and appreciated the holistic approach promoted by the tutor “It’s good for the whole body from top to toes”. Many reported improvements to their physical wellbeing and reported that the exercise had improved their sleep. One woman explained that when she first started attending the class she used a wheelchair, but that as a result of the regular exercise, her balance had improved and she could now manage with just a walking frame.
Silver Trees in Peckham

Link Age Southwark’s weekly Silver Trees group has been meeting in a sheltered housing unit in Peckham since October 2013. Many of the residents have complex medical needs and significantly reduced mobility, which can make it difficult for them to leave their flats or undertake routine personal care without assistance. The oldest member of the group has recently celebrated her 107th birthday. Silver Trees group alternates between gentle exercise and creative activities, always finishing with a cup of tea and a chat. The residents explain what coming to Silver Trees means to them:

“We feel safe and secure in our comfortable flats but living on your own is boring and the loneliness gets to you when you can’t get out. It’s difficult to find people to talk to and, without activities, many people sleep or watch television all day. Once the door to your flat is closed you know that is it – there is nobody to say hello to. Some people never get out. It is demoralising to be dependent on other people all the time.

We love Silver Trees and look forward to it. We always feel good after coming to the group. It means we get out and meet people. We enjoy being around other people and it gives us pleasure to try to help each other with the activities. We get to hear different opinions and to interact with each other. We always have a laugh and it makes us forget our troubles. The more things that are going on, the better. We want to say thank you to Link Age Southwark and all their supporters. We enjoy coming to the group. Everyone is very willing and does a good job; you can ask anything and get an answer. They are not just volunteers, but friends also; they are all good people.”

“It means a lot to me, coming to the group. I really enjoy it. It’s something to look forward to. I always think “roll on Thursday”. I wish we could have it twice a week. I love this group.” Violet, 76

Gardening, DIY and transport services

Our volunteers continue to deliver our light gardening, DIY and transport services. Many older people tell us that help with small, practical tasks, like changing a light bulb, helps them continue to live independently in their own homes for longer than they would otherwise be able to.

Transport, too makes a huge difference to people’s lives when they are unable to use public transport. Volunteer drivers like Ken help ensure that people can still take part in social activities outside their homes and remain connected to their wider community.
Ken, 66, has lived in Southwark all his life. He retired from his job in patient transport almost three years ago and has been a committed volunteer driver for Link Age Southwark for the past year.

“I had a neighbour who belonged to Link Age Southwark and it said in one of her newsletters that they needed volunteers. I was at home, the car was outside all week and I knew they wanted drivers to take people to outings and meetings. I thought, well if I can help out, it’ll make use of my car. So I applied and they did my checks and training and I started.

I take people to a coffee morning and to a peer group (this morning I’ve taken three people along) and I’ve just started taking people to a yoga group as well. Every week I take the same lady to a reading group – she lives a good life but she’s lost her sense of direction and her memory’s not what it was, so she has to write everything down. She’s also got a bit of a problem with her leg, but other than that she’s as right as rain and I enjoy helping her get out and about.

I also help out at quite a few of the fundraising events. This evening it’s an open garden in Sydenham so I’m going to that and on Sunday there’s another open garden in Dulwich. I’m picking up another volunteer who’s over 90! It’s very sociable to meet up with the other people from Link Age Southwark who will be there – there are volunteers of all ages, so you can have a chat with them. It’s just nice to feel like you’re helping someone out.”
Spotlight on our volunteers

Volunteers are the backbone of Link Age Southwark and have an enormous impact on the health and well-being of communities. They make such a difference to so many people’s lives and improve their own quality of life in the process. We’re delighted that Southwark Council and the local NHS continue to understand, recognise and support the value that Link Age Southwark’s volunteers add to the health and wellbeing of so many Southwark residents.

In 2016, we had 388 people from diverse backgrounds actively volunteer with us, reducing isolation and loneliness, helping older people live independently in their own homes, and improving people’s quality of life across the borough week in, week out. Those 388 volunteers visit older people, do light gardening and odd-jobs or drive people to our groups or to other social activities. More than 136 volunteers supported us at our fundraising and community events last year and 20 dedicated people helped run our regular groups across the borough. 33 volunteers provided back office support to make sure that we can achieve as much as we do.

In total, our amazing volunteers gave over 17,000 hours of their time to Link Age Southwark last year, to support older people in their local community!

With demand for our services increasing, and with a waiting list of people in need of a befriender, we always need more volunteers. We are now embarking upon a period of growth, recruiting two new staff members to reach even more potential volunteers. Volunteers like Beck and Angela…

Beck, Volunteer befriender

Beck, 37, has been a volunteer befriender since April 2000.

“I’ve been visiting Wendy for 16 years now. She’s 93 and moved into a nursing home four years ago but I still see her every other week.

I go along and chat to her for an hour. She thanks me for coming to visit and says how important it is to her. She seems to think my life is very exciting - which it’s not! I suppose that’s because she hasn’t been out for such a long time, apart from trips to the hospital. If I’ve been on holiday I’ll take photos to show her and she loves that. She loves reminiscing too - the last time I visited she was telling me all about how she’d been a fire woman in the war.

She’s from the north, like me, but has been here for 70 years now. We always laugh about Londoners. Her family all live outside London so she doesn’t get to see them as often as she sees me.

All of my friends know I visit Wendy and I always encourage other people to get involved - in fact I recruited someone quite recently. It’s especially good if you’ve just moved to the area to get to know someone who’s been here for a long time.

Wendy has become important to me. Early on, when I was working in quite a tough job, I really appreciated my visits to her as something that was consistent every week. Now it’s a real friendship. I love seeing her. Her health has deteriorated a bit recently, but she’s still always so glad to see me. She says, ‘Oh, I’m so glad you’ve come. I’ve been really miserable but now you’re here I know you’ll cheer me up.’ It’s really nice.”
Angela

Angela, 73 is a retired school science technician. She’s lived in the area all her life and began volunteering as a befriender almost 20 years ago. She now runs a weekly Link Age Southwark group called Golden Oldies as well as volunteering at fundraising events and community fairs, making things for our craft fairs and baking cakes to raise much-needed funds.

“After my husband died 19 years ago I needed something to do so I started befriending. The first lady I visited didn’t have any family over here - they were all in Ireland and her daughter sent a really lovely letter saying how grateful she was that there was someone here who was visiting her mum when she couldn’t. She sent a donation to the charity too. It was nice to think that I’d done something that someone else appreciated, not just the lady I was visiting.

When I was asked to help run the Golden Oldies group four years ago I wasn’t sure at first, but it was coming up for winter time and I thought if I don’t get out and do something I’ll just be stuck indoors. So I decided I would do it and I do enjoy it.

The group takes place every Wednesday. I serve the tea and biscuits and generally look after everybody. The office arranges for people to come and talk. Three weeks out of four we do chair-based exercises which they like. The main thing for the people who come to the group is the chance to get out of the house. I know some of them don’t really go anywhere else. It’s good to know that I’m making a difference to people’s lives and getting so much out of it myself as well.”
Get involved & make a difference

You can help us by joining our large, diverse and dedicated team of volunteers from across Southwark and beyond. Your talents could enrich your life and make a difference to older people in your community! Our team will train and support you to deliver our volunteer roles:

**Befriending**
Regular visits with an older person

**Driving**
Helping older people get out and about to maintain a social life in the wider community

**Telephone befriending**
Regular phone calls with an older person

**Helping at groups**
Making refreshments, running activities and enjoying the company of others

**Odd-jobs**
Assisting with light practical tasks e.g. changing a lightbulb or hanging a picture

**Gardening**
Helping with tidying and other light gardening

**Escorted shopping**
Accompanying someone to the shops

**Fundraising**
Leading or helping at fundraising events to raise our profile and valuable funds

**Office support**
Either regular or one-off volunteering in our office

We have many other roles to suit anyone who can contribute their time and skills. In the last year, our volunteers have also supported us with back-office work including writing funding bids, updating our website, inputting into our new database, designing forms and posters, stuffing envelopes, hand-delivering our newsletter, writing reports, evaluating our groups, interviewing our service users, delivering training and much, much more!

**Age of our volunteers**

- 16-19
- 20-29
- 30-39
- 40-49
- 50-59
- 60-69
- 70-79
- 80-89
- 90-99
Link Age Southwark

Finances

Link Age Southwark has a strong focus on value for money. As a local charity, we recognise the value of every penny that is donated and every volunteer hour that is contributed to support older people in our local community.

Our income for the financial year ending 31st March 2016 was some £301,683, an 1.4% increase from the previous year. It included substantial grants from a wide variety of funders, including the London Borough of Southwark and the local NHS, and several generous Trusts and Foundations. We were again fortunate to receive strong community support from a large number of local businesses, churches, individual donors, members of our Patrons group, as well as benefiting from the proceeds of local concerts and other events. Our Patrons group of valued supporters who make an annual donation worth at least £500 grew to 42 members. And we had another successful year of fundraising events in the local community, once again benefiting from the generosity and support of so many people across Southwark.

With careful budgeting, we were able to consolidate the charity’s position and build a strong platform from which to plan for an expansion of our activity. We invested in our organisational development, upgraded our technology and invested in staff training and development. We delivered a surplus of £21,879 which will be used to maintain our reserves and invest in the sustainable growth strategy the Trustees have agreed for the charity. We ensure our reserves are consistent with our policy of having approximately 6 months of running costs. In addition we have retained designated funds to cover the risks associated with our current offices and our need to move to new premises when Dulwich Community Hospital, where we are based, is redeveloped.
Budget and fundraising for 2015/16

Income and Expenditure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Financial year ending 31/3/2016</th>
<th>Financial year ending 31/3/2015</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>£301,683</td>
<td>£297,519</td>
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<tr>
<td>Expenditure</td>
<td>£279,804</td>
<td>£271,523</td>
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Expenditure by category 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expenditure type</th>
<th>2016 Total</th>
<th>£279,804</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Charitable Funds</td>
<td>£258,677</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundraising</td>
<td>£27,127</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Sources of funds 2015/16

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Funding Source</th>
<th>2016 Total</th>
<th>£123,250 (41%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Funding from Southwark Council/NHS Southwark</td>
<td></td>
<td>£123,250 (41%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grant income</td>
<td></td>
<td>£100,963 (33%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donations and other voluntary income</td>
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<td>£62,295 (21%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community fundraising events</td>
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<td>£11,999 (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bank Interest</td>
<td></td>
<td>£3,176 (1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>£301,683</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Trustees’ annual report and independently examined accounts for the year to 31st March 2016 are available from the office on request.

At the beginning of the new financial year (April 2016), Trustees have set a modest growth budget with a turnover of some £340,000 and another ambitious, but realistic, fundraising target. We are focusing on securing grants from a range of trusts and foundations, as well as seeking major statutory funding from the London Borough of Southwark and the Southwark NHS Clinical Commissioning Group.
Thank You

To our major funders

The London Borough of Southwark
Southwark NHS Clinical Commissioning Group
The City of London Corporation’s Charity City Bridge Trust
Camberwell Community Council
The Dulwich Almshouse Charity
The Drapers’ Charitable Fund
Dulwich Community Council
The Elizabeth and Prince Zaiger Trust
Garfield Weston Foundation
The John Horseman Trust
The Mercers’ Company Charitable Trust
Peckham and Nunhead Community Council
The Sobell Foundation
The Wakefield and Tetley Trust
The Worshipful Company of Actuaries Charity

To our Patrons

Noel & Caroline Annesley
John Baldwin
Ken Barnes
Vivian Bazalgette
Michael & Halldora Blair
Jean Cary-Elwes
Robert & Myra Chapman
Patricia Cox
Andrew Cullen
Neville De Souza
Brian & Penelope Foord
Brian & Genevieve Gosschalk
Charmian & Timothy Hornsby C.B.E.
Jean Howell
Rebecca Howell
Aidan Jones OBE
Nicola Kakkar
Barbara Kolator
George Krygier
Morton Lim

Clarissa Machin
Michael & Susan Merifield
Nicholas & Lindsay Merriman
Ian Morgan
Tony O’Flaherty
Lesley O’Mara
Jane Onslow
Katherine Opie-Smith
Michelle Pearce
Jeremy and Jackie Prescott
Charles & Celia Randell
Barbara Richardson
Edward & Marguerite Robinson
Deborah Roslund
Ted & Jenny Salmon
Katharine St. John-Brooks
Susan Sternglass Noble
Valerie Strachan D.B.E
Anne Sullivan
Hugh & Diane Taylor
Graham Walsh & Margaret Walsh
John & Judith Ward
Helen Watson
Andrew & Catrin Waugh
Tom & Brenda Wells
Barbara & John Wheen
And to our patrons who wish to remain anonymous.

To our partners and supporters

Abbeyfield House, Herne Hill
Age UK Lewisham and Southwark
Alleyn Park Garden Centre
Alleyn’s School
Amott Baptist Church
Angela Burgess & SEMags
Anne-Marie Briscombe Photography
ASDA
The Ashton Edwards Trust
The Alzheimer’s Society
Barclays
Barry Bailey
Belair House, Dulwich
Berrondsey Street Festival
Blackfriars Settlement
Bob’s Wines
Bread & Roses Theatre
Catherine Mitchell Jewellery
Changes Hair Salon
The Charter School
Chichirara
Christ’s Chapel, Dulwich
Community Southwark
Cook, West Dulwich
Crystal Palace Road Big Lunch
Dulwich Books
Dulwich College
The Dulwich Festival
The Dulwich Funraisers
Dulwich Golf Club
Dulwich Luncheon Club
Dulwich Picture Gallery
Dulwich Runners
The Dulwich Society
Dulwich & Sydenham Hill Golf Club
The Dulwich Trader – Rigby & Mac
The East Dulwich Tavern
Eastern Cuisine, Gipsy Hill
The Fox on the Hill Pub
Gail’s Bakery
The Ivy House
Irish Times
James Allen’s Community Orchestra
James Allen’s Girls’ School
Jane Newbery
Jo Merry
Jonny Donovan Photography
Kevin Fitzpatrick
Kingsdale School
Kingswood House
Knight Frank
Lambeth Ladies Choir

The League of Friends of Dulwich Community Hospital
Lesley Leale-Green
Lew Evans House
Lila’s Jewels, East Dulwich
Lime Tree House
The Lordship Pub
Manuel’s Restaurant and Bar
Marilyn Harper
Media Trust
The Metro
Michael O’Mara Books Ltd
Oliver Bonas
Push Studios
Rocca, Dulwich
Rotarians Easing Problems of Dementia (REPoD)
The Rotary Club of Dulwich and Peckham
Roullier White, East Dulwich
South East London Folk Orchestra
Southwark Brewery Company
Southwark Pensioners Centre
St. Barnabas Church, Dulwich
St. Clement with St Peter, East Dulwich
St. James’ Cloister
St. Mary’s Church, Peckham
St. Olave’s School
St. Paul’s Church, Herne Hill
St. Stephen’s Church, Dulwich
Suzanne James Catering
Thompson Reuters
Time and Talents
ToastED, East Dulwich
Weald Group Ltd.
The Victoria Inn, Peckham
Village Books, Dulwich

And to our many friends, garden openers, runners, cake bakers and individual donors who so generously supported us throughout the year.
People

Honorary Presidents
Dame Tessa Jowell
Edward Salmon

Trustees (as of 1st September 2016)
Katharine St. John-Brooks Chair
Adrian Greenwood Deputy Chair and Company Secretary
Tim Roberts Treasurer
Patricia Cox
Neville Da Souza
Juanita Fan
Kirsty Gould
Nicholas Merriman QC
Lesley O’Mara
Edward Salmon
Susan Sternglass Noble
Anne Sullivan

Staff Team (as of 1st September 2016)
Gemma Juma Director
Meenaxi Chavda Dementia Project Co-ordinator
Bethany Holttum Service Co-ordinator (on maternity leave)
Jennie Linnett Volunteer Co-ordinator/Community Fundraising Support
Michele McKeown Volunteer Co-ordinator
Hilary Payne Service Co-ordinator
Claire Street Service Co-ordinator
Sue Yeomans Service Co-ordinator
Saira Quli and Melissa Kent Freelance Dementia Project Assistants
Louise Lear Freelance Administrative Assistant
Michelle Sinclair Book-keeper

Thank you to
All our tutors, to our volunteer drivers, administrators, office support, befrienders, gardeners, fundraisers, DIY-ers, designers, donors, and to the older people of Southwark for making this such a wonderful place to live!
For 23 years we have been providing friendly volunteer support to older people across Southwark, reducing loneliness and isolation and helping older people maintain active lives within the wider community. Our fantastic volunteers bring joy to people’s lives and support older people to thrive in later life.

Link Age Southwark
Dulwich Community Hospital
East Dulwich Grove
London SE22 8PT
www.linkagesouthwark.org
@LASwark
info@linkagesouthwark.org
Registered Charity No 1105923
Registered Company No 05189161

Formerly
Dulwich Helpline
and Southwark Churches Care

Designed by Kevin Fitzpatrick