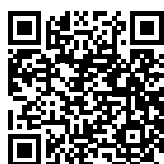


South London Acts: From urgent response to a long-term movement of change, tackling deep rooted health inequalities.



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Watch the South
London Listens film

To everyone involved in South London Listens so far, thank you.
What you have told us has shaped our priorities and your commitment has helped us achieve so much.

Introduction

South London Listens began life in 2020 as a response to the Covid-19 pandemic and an outpouring of both anger and energy from local communities and statutory partners about how to help prevent a mental ill-health crisis.

What began as an urgent response has formed into a movement for change - using the power of community organising to tackle the biggest barriers to good mental health and wellbeing across south London.

While we were all locked down, community leaders came together through online meetings, 1-2-1s and group conversations, to run a major listening campaign involving more than 6,000 people in partnership with Citizens UK, a national community organising charity. At a community-led summit in June 2021, leaders from the NHS and local authorities were proud to pledge their support to our communities' asks.

South London Listens became the programme of work delivering on these pledges. We launched our 2021-2023 Action Plan - produced with support from

NHS, local authorities and community organisations, and in October 2022, we came together again to celebrate successes and renew our commitment to delivering our plan.

Building on the work achieved to-date, in the summer of 2023 we launched a new phase of listening called Going Deeper. More than 4,000 people took part from diverse communities such as refugees, migrants, ethnic minorities, disabled individuals, deaf and neurodiverse individuals, those in low-paid or insecure work, children, young people, carers, lone parents, older adults, and LGBTQ+ individuals. Working in partnership to refine our priorities, surfaced new issues and explored shared solutions. The result was a powerful commitment from NHS and local authorities to drive our programme forward to tackle deep rooted health inequalities across South London.



June 2020

The first virtual summit, leading to the establishment of our first Taskforce, with over 25 organisations including NHS, Local Authorities, Citizens UK and voluntary and community organisations.

October 2022

On World Mental Health Day we held our Accountability Assembly, where NHS and local authority leaders showcased innovative and ongoing commitments to work around the four South London Listens priorities in each of the 12 South London Boroughs.

December 2023

Work begins to deliver on action plan across south London boroughs, alongside developing plans for a sustainable long-term programme of work.

April - May 2021

'Problem to issue' workshops co-chaired by community leaders, NHS and local authorities help define the four South London Listens priorities and co-produce 22 solution focused pledges.

January 2023

Our South London Listens Year One (2021/22) impact report is published. The report sets out the progress made by all partners in delivering on the pledges we have made to our communities.

November 2020 - March 2021

South London Listens Community Campaign launched - training 300 leaders and listening to over 6,000 people.

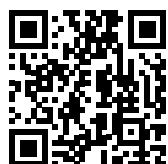
October 2021

South London Listens two-year Action Plan launched with robust governance in place to oversee delivery.

June - September 2023

We listened to over 4,000 people across south London to refine our priorities and co-develop new solutions - in partnership with the South East London Anchor Programme.

Watch videos of our events



June 2021

Community-led summit inviting decision makers to pledge to community 'asks'.

November 2023

Senior NHS and local authority leaders came together to commit to a range of new pledges to action, co-developed with community leaders following the Going Deeper listening campaign. This took place at two community health assemblies attended by over 700 people.

Our work in numbers

10,116

people listened to

920

Community Leaders **trained** in organising

38

pledges

5,000

people attending seven assemblies

270

people participating
in **12** 'problem to issue' workshops

63

Be Well **organisations connecting** with
at least **2800** people monthly

4,600

people receiving wage uplifts with
seven NHS Trusts now living wage accredited

240

South London GP surgeries
now signed up as 'safe surgeries'

200

tech devices donated to groups
including the Refugee Council, Age UK,
and local children's centres

over **7,500**

families with access to a new Child
and Adolescent Mental Health Service
(CAMHS) virtual waiting room

100

parents and young people involved
in co-design and delivery of
new wellbeing initiatives

over **180**

migrant and refugees supported
by new Community
Embedded Worker roles

Our priorities

Through listening to over 10,000 people since 2020, five core South London Listens priorities have been identified.

In the 2021 South London Listens Action Plan, 22 pledges were committed to by NHS and local authority partners relating to the first four pledges (see right). These were refined with an additional 16 new pledges added at the Accountability Assembly in October 2022.

Following the Going Deeper listening campaign in summer of 2023 in partnership with the South East London Integrated Care Board (SEL ICB) Anchor Programme, a new priority area of housing was included and 16 new action pledges were agreed.

This report outlines our progress in fulfilling the pledges in our Action Plan for 2021-2023. Detailed evaluation reports for specific projects mentioned here are accessible on our website via www.southlondonlistens.org/impact.

Each priority section includes Our Future Plan — highlighting our updated plan of action 2023-2024 following our November 2023 pledges.



Priority one

Social isolation, loneliness and digital exclusion



Priority two

Work and wages



Priority three

Children, young people and parental mental health



Priority four

Access to mental health services for migrants, refugee and diaspora communities



Priority five

Housing (new priority area agreed at Community Assembly in Nov 2023)

Building an evidence-based blueprint for mental health prevention

Our goal is to tackle deep rooted health inequalities and to build a blueprint for mental ill-health prevention using the power of community listening and organising that bridges the mental health system and communities. We are working to define this model with the community, build our evidence-base, and empower others in the NHS and local authorities to adopt and roll out.

Using a **'theory of change'** methodology, South London Listens has worked with evaluation partners, academic advisors, and community leaders to implement a rigorous approach to evaluating this goal.

Our overarching strategic aims for this work are:

- 1. Communities feel listened to, validated, and empowered to improve mental health and wellbeing.**
- 2. Stronger relationships and social capital within and between communities.**
- 3. More trusting and equitable relationships built between communities, the NHS, and local authorities.**
- 4. We successfully take action together on structural and systemic inequalities and injustices that impact mental health.**
- 5. We create cost-effective models and interventions for strengthening communities and preventing mental ill-health.**

To support our long-term evaluation strategy, we have established a partnership with the Centre for Society and Mental Health at King's College London whose vision is to develop research to promote and sustain good mental health in communities. We are also working with community leaders to shape success measures and embed participatory methods to collect evidence in our projects.

We pleased that our work has been officially recognised as part of the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities Prevention Concordat for Better Mental Health.



Download our first **'Theory of Change'** evaluation report.



Guiding our programme

South London Listens programme is a powerful collaboration of both south London Integrated Care Boards, the three south London mental health trusts, local authorities and over 150 community organisations across south London. The programme has been co-developed and supported by strategic partner Citizens UK and overseen by the South London Listens Taskforce.

The work of the Taskforce has driven forward the innovative relational approach we've adopted with the programme – ensuring that community leaders, NHS and local authority leadership meet regularly to deliver our co-developed pledges.

It has been led by Ann Beasley CBE (Chair, South West London and St George's Mental Health NHS Trust), Sir Norman Lamb (Chair, South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust), and Rt Revd Dr Rosemarie Mallett (Bishop of Croydon). Wider membership has included community leaders and representatives from each of the South London Listens partners,

including south London local authorities, mental health trusts, and the south east and south west Integrated Care Boards.

In addition, a key element of the governance of South London Listens has been a high-level advisory group, bringing the community together with NHS leadership, council leaders and senior cabinet leads, to support the programme. It has played a key role in shaping and providing collective leadership to drive the mental ill-health prevention agenda in south London – specifically to align work at a local level.

Chairs of South London Listens Taskforce



The Rt Revd Dr Rosemarie Mallett,
Bishop of Croydon



Sir Norman Lamb, Chair,
South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust



Ann Beasley CBE,
Chair, South West London and St George's Mental Health NHS Trust



With thanks to our brilliant Taskforce members. Read more about them

“When we heard about South London Listens, we were hopeful yet reserved in our judgement of it. Over the years we have seen co-production done well at times, but also done badly. Then I attended the community organising training delivered by Citizens UK and what I experienced really spoke to my values of unity and solidarity. The mental health training further solidified my faith in the project. I think this project is poignant and timely. What we see now is a commitment to placing those at the margin closer to the centre.

“The historical timing of South London Listens is key to its success. This project had to happen and has happened, and we are proud to be on board.”

Fiona Denton from Sutton Mental Health Foundation



How we have delivered against our pledges

Priority one

Social isolation, loneliness, and digital exclusion



The Covid-19 pandemic has had a deep impact on the mental health and wellbeing of every one of us. Whether it was dealing with the virus itself, job loss, juggling the demands of work and home schooling, missing family and friends, or the tragedy of losing a loved one, we have all had a very personal experience of living through the pandemic.

For many of us pandemic effects have been short lived, but for others Covid-19 has continued to cast a long shadow as people have begun to rebuild their lives. And we know from listening to thousands of Londoners that social isolation and loneliness, and digital exclusion remain significant issues affecting our communities, which can often be overlooked but have a real impact on our mental and physical health. Most worryingly, it is people from communities who were already experiencing significant racial and socio-economic disadvantage that have faced the brunt of worsening social isolation, stress, depression, and anxiety.



Since November 2021, we have been working with our NHS and local authority partners on the following pledges made to the community:

November 2021 Action Plan pledges

For South London Listens partners to:

- Support and resource a Mental Health Champions programme.
- Develop a social isolation, loneliness and digital inclusion strategy in each borough.



October 2022 Assembly pledges

- For each mental health trust to continue to listen, support and act with the Be Well organisations to better respond to challenges to mental health across South London.

This is how we have responded:

Be Well Programme

We have worked with our communities to develop an innovative programme, called Be Well, designed to develop the capability and capacity of community and voluntary organisations to support the wellbeing of local people.

The programme has been delivered in a flexible way, allowing community leaders to co-produce the model and articulate what impact looks like for them. Be Well organisations are supported by community organisers and the NHS to do three things:

- 1. Build relationships and provide a place for community members to talk to one another - developing activities and practices that seek to increase social connection, reduce social isolation, and improve wellbeing.**
- 2. Offer practice support and signposting to build connections between communities and NHS services.**
- 3. Take action with the wider community to act on structural and systemic inequalities and injustices that impact their mental health.**



The impact we've had

Since the launch in June 2022, over 240 people from across 63 organisations have been trained to become Community Champions and supported to accredit and take part in the Be Well programme. Our pilot evaluation study has demonstrated positive impact across five key outcomes demonstrating their power and ability to make a difference in communities.

- 1. Community leaders are confidently able to support themselves and others in their community.**
- 2. Stronger social connectedness and support within and between communities**
- 3. Communities successfully organise and act on structural and systemic inequalities and injustices that impact their mental health.**
- 4. Communities are effectively connected into the NHS and place-based decision makers to address key challenges.**



Download our
Be Well evaluation report

1 Community leaders are confidently able to support themselves and others in their community.

Our evaluation has shown statistically significant improvements in champions' knowledge, understanding and skills after completing training. This was particularly the case for champions who came from faith-based organisations such as mosques and

churches, commonly describing previous experiences of mental health training as mostly theological and did not practically prepare them for conversations and the support they had to provide.



One minister responsible for two churches highlighted how the training had enabled him to lead by example: “I’ve made a point of talking about mental health more from the front on a Sunday. You know, some of my own experiences and with the church leadership team, I’ve been able to say a bit more than I would say from the front.”

As a result of this, more people wanted to talk about their own wellbeing and a weekly drop-in session was set up that is now led by other members. There were also instances where champions were able to use the role and training for professional development.

For example, one Champion spoke about how a member of their core team was inspired by the programme to pursue further training to get into a mental health-related profession.



2 Stronger social connectedness and support within and between communities.

Be Well organisations are regularly delivering a broad range of wellbeing activities in their local communities – with conservative estimates of at least 60 activities, reaching at least 2,800 people every month.

The adaptability of the model has enabled champions to respond to community needs and context.



Case study:

A Be Well site in Greenwich used their English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes to not only improve English language skills but build understanding, friendships and create supportive communities: “We can start our class more often with answering questions such as “What happened to you last week?” or “What makes you happy today?.”

Many Be Well organisations started their journey by establishing coffee mornings. This was helpful in developing baseline engagement and appetite, whilst allowing champions to trial and test their offering in a safe and inclusive way. Over time, hubs began to adapt and launch new activities responding to the need of their community. In recent months, established sites found that creative wellbeing activities such as arts and crafts, knitting, dance, music, walks, gardening, and cooking are the most successful at consistently reaching and engaging seldom-heard groups.

There is greater connection and collaboration between Be Well organisations and different communities through Be Well networks, including working together to share local assets, resources and knowledge and leading peer learning through Be Well networks. For many, the programme has allowed them to work with new organisations who share a similar commitment to community-led wellbeing. Some champions have told us it also offered the opportunity to work with other organisations they may not have traditionally worked with such as different faith-based institutions, schools, community groups and specialist voluntary and community sector organisations. Relationships have ranged from informal check-ins and WhatsApp groups focused on peer support, to more formal collaborations and resource sharing.

Case study:

A Champion in Kingston established a drop-in hobby craft club and coffee morning for women from migrant backgrounds to connect: "You don't have to pre-register for the sessions so there is no pressure on the day, and you don't have to come to every session. Some women who come to these sessions have stories to share and these sessions are a safe space for women to come and feel comfortable over a hot drink, chat and importantly, to listen...It's about supporting each other and helping to signpost people to services or organisations which might be helpful."

Case study:

In Sutton an innovative partnership has been developed following the Be Well training – a Parents and Carers mental wellbeing information and advice session. The project is delivered at the library by NHS and Sutton Council's family hub, the Sutton Mental Health Foundation and Health visiting services to help parents access advice and support, understand and access local resources. This might include advising on domestic abuse, financial advice and a range of family support services. These organisations were not working together before the Be Well training.

Case study:

In Southwark, a site was able to offer free indoor space in their church in exchange for access to wellbeing gardening activities by their neighbouring community park group. As the programme has become more established, some local networks are collaborating to recruit new local hubs, reach new socio-demographic groups such as support for LGBTQ+ communities, or apply for other funding to scale-up existing activities with new partners.



3 Communities successfully organise and act on structural and systemic inequalities and injustices that impact their mental health.

In recent months, the number of champions leading regular listening events and developing campaigns has increased as hubs have become more established.

In Southwark, Be Well organisations came together through a Festival of Community Listening to develop and deliver a range of creative listening activities and take action. In Merton, members from the YMCA took action together on housing support provided by the local authority, resulting in their Hub designing and delivering training for housing council offers. Hubs in Lewisham were actively involved in leading the South London Listens Safe Surgeries campaign.

This has meant that champions have developed infrastructure to not only support the immediate wellbeing of their communities but also listen, focus, and respond to the social determinants driving mental ill-health and wellbeing locally.

Community organising was seen as particularly powerful for children and young people, who not only felt heard but had a greater sense of agency to lead and influence decision making.

“Schools we are working with have done lots of different talks with decision makers in the NHS and local authorities, about what challenges they’re facing and why it’s so important that they continue to invest in this work. They’ve talked a lot about how they feel as young people - that their voices aren’t heard and that there’s all kinds of hierarchy in school. I think Be Well has been helping to change that hierarchy dynamic within the school, which has been really exciting to see and to see how that has made them feel like they can take on new things and get more involved.”

Community Organiser

4 Communities are effectively connected to the NHS and place-based decision makers to address key challenges.

Building and strengthening relationships between decision makers and communities is a key aim of the programme, driven by providing opportunities to link decision makers and communities more effectively.

In Lambeth Be Well sites have successfully built relationships with local councillors, resulting in the development of a working group to support the Building Better Futures campaign as well as a commitment to launch Be Well schools in the borough.

Through a relationship with the South East London Integrated Care System, the Lewisham network of organisations are working with Goldsmiths University to co-design the Goldsmiths Wellbeing Clinic. It is free to use and provides therapy, especially for racially and religiously minoritised service users locally. Be Well organisations in Kingston, Merton and Greenwich are independently working with local authorities.

“We and our community realise how important on-going support is. We need a long-term commitment from our NHS partners as well. We’ve also faced challenges, especially knowing we have updated, holistic and appropriate signposting resources to give to our community. We really value the relationship with the NHS and support we’ve received - like training, mentoring and resources. We’d like this to be a reality for all Be Well spaces - inclusive and accessible for people from all cultures, races, faiths, circumstances, and backgrounds.”

Be Well Leader

Adapting Be Well to community needs

We’ve also successfully adapted Be Well and launched new initiatives to meet the needs of specific target groups and build relationships with wider partners:

- Over the summer of 2023, we carried out specific work with 10 Spanish speaking organisations in south London, translating and delivering our Be Well mental health and organising training.
- One Be Well organisation, Creating Ground, has designed a differentiated model of mental health and wellbeing support focused on supporting migrant mums and mums-to-be with weekly drop-in sessions to share their experiences of using maternity services.



Digital Exclusion

Since its inception, the South London Listens team has been supporting and championing work taking place across our partners to address social isolation and the digital divide.

South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust has developed a partnership with **Community Tech Aid** to rescue, repair and recycle unused equipment, helping the local community to get online whilst reducing e-waste. They donated almost 200 devices to groups including Refugee Council, Age UK, and local children's centres. Best practice also highlighted by partners included work in Lambeth and Bexley to develop digital inclusion toolkits and create local networks to enable self-assessment and provide support.

We have looked to share best practice, including holding a session with **Neighbourly Lab**, **Campaign to End Loneliness** and **What Works Centre for Wellbeing** to present a new report commissioned by the Greater London Authority to explore the unequal distribution of loneliness across the capital.

From listening to our communities, we have also been able to support work that meets emerging needs. For example, we know that many in our communities struggle to access stable and secure housing.

Families in temporary accommodation face eviction without notice and struggle to access Wi-Fi. This can have a negative impact on their children. Through our Be Well organisations, the Notice Us campaign was started to call for stable and fair temporary accommodation in Greenwich.

Leaders shared stories and took creative action to raise these issues with Greenwich Council. After lots of hard work, they won a commitment from the Council to start a pilot programme giving SIM cards to people in temporary accommodation.

This win shows the power of decision-makers and community leaders working together. It has also kick-started wider work with other councils to share this model and opportunity further.



Our future plan for mental health, social isolation and digital exclusion

In November 2023, South London Listens partners committed to the following:

November 2023 Assembly

- For the south London Integrated Care Boards to continue to resource and support Be Well organisations. Agree to fund a deeper, longer-term social return on investment evaluation of the Be Well model.
- For Local Care Partnerships and relevant members on each Trust's team to work alongside us to explore key signposting challenges and training gaps for your boroughs (especially for prioritised groups like migrants and parents) on a regular basis and create a plan to address them.
- For local authorities to agree to work with us over the next 12 months to help scope and develop a Be Well Borough strategy, building on local initiatives underway and learnings from existing Be Well leaders.

What we will do

- In 2024/25, we will continue to develop and expand our Be Well programme - working with existing organisations and leaders to

support them to build up their Be Well offer - alongside training up and onboarding new interested leaders and organisations.

- We will be working with our Be Well organisations to refresh their annual action plans - and explore borough based networks to share best practice, offer training in small groups and understand local need and opportunities. Through this group, we will be taking forward work on tackling signposting challenges locally.
- We will be launching quarterly Communities of Practice meetings to provide more training and support to Be Well leaders on issues, and enable sites to learn from Be Well sites in other boroughs.
- We will be developing our Be Well Borough strategies through quarterly sessions at a Borough level with our Taskforce leads and local stakeholders to align with and build on local work. We will be publishing our second phase Be Well evaluation in 2025.
- We will be working with community leaders and Integrated Care Systems to spread best practice around digital inclusion and ensure more our communities have access to training and technology. We will also be working with Citizens UK to build on the success of campaigns to provide free wifi for people in temporary accommodation.

Priority two

Work and wages



Work and mental health are inextricably linked. We heard from our communities about how work is good for our mental health. We also heard being unemployed, or in a challenging work environment, can have a significant negative impact on our wellbeing.

Likewise, being on low or insecure wages causes stress and anxiety that can undermine our mental health. The pandemic had a devastating effect on the economy and businesses and services across the United Kingdom. This has been exacerbated through the cost of living crisis and ongoing financial pressure faced by south London communities.

Since November 2021, we have been working with our NHS and local authority partners on the following pledges:



November 2021 Action Plan pledges

NHS to:

- Work towards accrediting all mental health trusts in south London as Living Wage employers.
- Champion the Living Wage within the health sector more widely, including encouraging GP surgeries, Clinical Commissioning Groups and hospitals to accredit as Living Wage employers.

Local authorities to:

- Accredit as a Living Wage employer, and if you've already done this as a Living Hours employer.
- Develop a Living Wage Places scheme in your borough.



Accountability Assembly 2022 pledges

- For three south London mental health trusts to continue to champion the real living wage so other employers in our communities follow our lead. We also asked for a commitment from the two south London Integrated Care Systems to hold a recruitment event at least once a year.

This is how we responded:

Delivering progress on the Living Wage

In 2021, South London Listens partners agreed to champion the living wage within the health sector and across local government. We are delighted that all three mental health trusts in south London have now been accredited and now seven NHS Trusts in total in south London are accredited. These developments have led to wage uplifts for 4,669 people.

In the last year, Wandsworth and Merton councils have now joined 8 Councils across south London. This work has already lifted the wages of over 8,000 thousands of people.

List of all NHS Trusts and Councils accredited as of financial year 2023/24

Croydon Health Services NHS Trust
Epsom and St Helier NHS Trust
Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust
Hounslow & Richmond Community Healthcare NHS Trust
King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
Kingston Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
Lewisham and Greenwich NHS Trust
London Ambulance Service NHS Trust
Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust
South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust
South West London and St George's Mental Health NHS Trust
Kingston Council
Richmond Council
Merton Council
Wandsworth Council
Lewisham Council
Lambeth Council
Southwark Council
Sutton Council
Croydon Council
Greenwich Council

“The Real Living Wage means fair pay to combat London’s rising cost of living, uplifting low-paid workers from poverty. But often, just the Living Wage alone is not enough - insecure hours mean that work and income are not always guaranteed. Living Hours, a guarantee minimum of 16 hours per week and regular shifts, are crucial to help low-paid workers to survive. We currently see seven Living Hours employers in London and look forward to more employers joining this figure.”

**Tahira, King’s College
London student**

Supporting communities through the cost of living crisis

South London Listens has worked with the Money and Pensions Service to provide a range of money and debt advice for south London communities, in response to the significant challenges faced through the cost of living crisis.

This work includes partnering with MoneyHelper from the Money and Pensions Service. MoneyHelper provides clear and impartial money and pensions guidance to help people stay on top of bills, track spending, cut back on costs and find extra support available. Eight MoneyHelper and pensions sessions were held, involving more than 120 people. A webinar series was also launched with three sessions on credit, debt awareness, and dealing with money worries. Over 100 people attended these.

Wider anchor developments across south London

Since 2021, we have been working with our NHS and local authority partners to explore the potential to utilise community organising approaches in driving forward their work as 'anchor institutions'.

We were delighted when the South East London Integrated Care Board formally launched a South East London Anchor Alliance in April 2023. The alliance brings together anchor institutions in south east London including NHS trusts, councils and universities, to explore opportunities to work together on the social determinants of health and use their collective influence and resources to reduce inequalities for the local community. The Alliance has committed to exploring how they can embed the Going Deeper pledges on work and wages, access to spaces for communities, and housing into their existing anchor programmes.

Similar work is being explored in South West London – aimed at overseeing the delivery of key pledges made at our Community Assembly, and scaling up work across the area.

Work Well Advice Line

In 2022/23, we ran a 12-month pilot of a community employment support line for people with mental health problems in Lambeth, Lewisham and Southwark. Run by South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust, the Work Well Advice Line provided free and confidential advice about employment to anyone who needed it.

344 people received support from the **Work Well Advice Line**, leading to service referrals and information provision. 24 per cent of callers were signposted to **NHS Talking Therapies** (formerly known as Improving Access to Psychological Therapies, IAPT).

Many users were positive about the service provided, with feedback from callers reflecting high levels of satisfaction. The helpline was able to support people who would not otherwise have accessed any kind of mental health service, providing tailored advice for people in difficult situations, predominantly related to employment. The total advice line usage was lower than hoped – with challenges around marketing, promotion and awareness of the service, which were made more difficult with the short length of the pilot. However, the learnings from this pilot have informed the development of a wider employment offer being rolled out across South London and the Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust.

“There isn't really any other service like it where you call up and get advice on the spot and get signposted to other services that can help.”

“It was needed. Especially for people who have no connections with mental health services, so they know it's there and I try to talk to them about, you know, there's no stigma, there's no shame in trying to seek help, whether you're in work or out of work.”

Quotes from Work Well Advice Line callers



Our future plan for work and wages

In November 2023, South London Listens partners committed to the following:

- We pledge to fulfil our commitment to working with the Living Wage Foundation to become an accredited living wage system within the next six months, with an action plan to champion living hours across the integrated care system over the next three years.
- We recognise that support for improving English language skills can be a route to good health through work and fair pay. We pledge to champion English as a Second Language support by signposting potential employees and providing space for classes and workshops.
- We pledge to work with our local communities to support underrepresented

groups, like young people, disabled people, migrants and returning to work parents, into jobs in our anchor institutions. We pledge to co-produce an action plan together over the next 12 months which will make roles in anchor institutions more accessible for people that experience barriers to good work.

What we will do

- In south east London, the pledges related to work and wages will be delivered through the Anchor System Programme, with support from the Anchor Alliance and South East London Integrated Care Board workforce team. In south west London, the pledges are being delivered through the Integrated Care Partnership, and anchor work in development.
- More information can be found at selondonics.org/who-we-are/our-work/population-health/making-the-most-of-our-assets/anchor-system-programme/

Priority three

Children, young people and parental mental health



The pandemic put immense pressure on the mental health of children, young people, parents and caregivers. Parents and young people have experienced significant barriers to their wellbeing, not only because of the pandemic but because of structural inequalities, exacerbated by the cost of living crisis.

The worsening insecurity has increased challenges and stresses experienced by families, which can impact their wellbeing and contribute to poor mental health. We have heard caregivers expressing feelings

of guilt and grappling with the stigma of 'not coping'. Many parents wanted mental health support but did not know where to get it – or experienced challenges with accessing care from mental health services.

Since November 2021, we have been working with our NHS and local authority partners on the following pledges:

November 2021 Action Plan pledges

NHS and local authorities to:

- Improve the interaction for young people on the waiting list for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) by developing something like a 'virtual waiting room'.
- Support and resource parent groups to offer peer-to-peer and co-produced mental health support.



October 2022 pledges

- For each mental health trust to commit to having CAMHS waiting times visible. For each mental health trust to share information on when your virtual CAMHS waiting room will be up and running and to keep communities engaged in the process.
- Parental Support - for each mental health trust to continue to work with your communities to build and extend peer-to-peer parent networks as a key part of your prevention strategy.

This is how we responded:

Working with mums

We worked with community leaders at Parents and Communities Together (now Parent Action) to develop two new courses – Mindful Mamas and Parent Upskilling. Parent Action are a charity who work with parents to build communities, provide support, and win change.



Mindful Mamas

Mindful Mamas was a seven-week wellbeing course which is parent-focused and co-produced with attendees. Six courses were developed across sites in Lambeth and Southwark between March 2022 to July 2023, working with 61 mothers.

The aim of the course was to improve the mental wellbeing of local mothers with young children experiencing challenges and barriers to support. After attending the Mindful Mamas course, average wellbeing scores increased for all groups of attendees. The impact was particularly strong amongst attendees with a high risk of depression before the course. Attendees reported that establishing a supportive and judgement-free community, re-establishing an identity outside of parenthood and developing confidence were key aspects of the course that led to improvements in wellbeing.

An additional notable benefit was improved relationships with children. The empowering, parent-focused and collaborative ethos of Mindful Mamas was highlighted by attendees as being at the centre of its success.

Maria's Story

For Maria, becoming a mum was a difficult and isolating experience. Having moved to London shortly before having children, she didn't have the support of family and didn't know any other mums in the area. The combination of lockdown and high nursery costs also left her without a job, which added to the isolation and impacted her self-esteem.

"I tell you, I was really, really isolated. My self-esteem was... I didn't have it. I was trying to look for a job because I lost mine for the lockdown. I was talking in an interview, and I had a blank, I couldn't talk. So, it was really bad to be honest."

Thankfully, things changed course for Maria when a parent at her daughter's nursery told her about Parent Action and encouraged her to join the Mindful Mamas course.

One of the main things that made Maria feel comfortable was the warm welcome she received from the staff and the other mums, especially when practicing her English. In Mindful Mamas she found a safe space to share her experiences, connect with others and learn tools to help her deal with the everyday challenges of life as a parent. Critically, she had found a place where she felt important and valued as a person and a woman, not just a parent.

“To be honest, that changed my life ... I started to get out more with other mums, I started to know other cultures and other people in the same situation. I felt like I was at home in family. It was amazing.

“They are not treating me as a mum, they are treating me as a person. Sometimes we forget, ourselves. We are mums, daughters, friends ... but we forget ourselves as a woman... It is amazing, how important you feel. So that is the special thing about (Parent Action).”

Maria

As she continued to practice mindfulness and became more embedded in the Parent Action community, Maria noticed big changes in her family life too, having more patience with her daughter and enjoying more quality time together.

Over a year after first completing the Mindful Mamas course, Maria is still engaged with the Parent Action community and no longer feels isolated. With new-found self-confidence and a desire to support other mums, she has also taken up a paid role as a Parent Action Parent Facilitator. As part of a parent-led team, she developed and delivered a course focused on building strong peer support groups within other community organisations.

Upskilling course

Alongside the wellbeing courses developed with Parent Action, we were also keen to explore how the reach of important parent peer-support work developed could be expanded. Parent Action worked to develop an 'Upskilling' course to help organisations offering parental peer-support to develop their approach and harness the power of parents to support mental health and wellbeing.

Across a series of nine training sessions and workshops, 12 Parent Action parents and the Parent Action team co-designed the Upskilling training course. The active Parent Facilitators were aged between 27-47 years-old, and each had between one and three children. Over 75 per cent identified as belonging to a minority ethnic group, as is representative of the local area. In 2022, Parent Facilitators led two complete courses at local community organisations working with eight parents.

“The good thing about the course was that it was run by mums as well. They could relate to you. ... it was nice to hear different experiences and talk about different things. I really enjoyed that.”

Upskilling participant

Many facilitators reported increases in confidence and self-belief, and there was a demand for additional sessions for staff.



Being part of the South London Listens project was an amazing journey for the Parent Action community. It provided an opportunity for parents' voices to be heard about the challenges they face and to take action on the issues that affect them. Creating Mindful Mamas with the parents was an enjoyable and enriching experience for everyone involved, with a unique course being created collaboratively to meet parents' needs. The course had a significant impact on parents' mental health and the learnings have reached beyond the course into special wellbeing sessions or weekly groups run by parents who attended Mindful Mamas. The Upskilling course was a great improvement in skills like time keeping. Uptake of

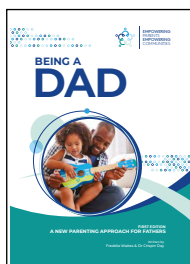
the programme from organisations wasn't as strong as Parent Action had hoped. A key challenge was working with organisations that didn't already have any parental leadership as it was such a new concept to develop – meaning securing buy-in was harder across organisations. However, in the organisations there were opportunities for parents to develop their skills and get other parents to think about how they can take the lead on mental health in their communities. Our trained Parent Facilitators have gone on to support Parent Action in other initiatives including an innovative community-led evaluation of our project.

Layla Meerlo, Senior Project Manager, Parent Action



'Being A Dad' Pilot

In 2022, we worked with the successful Empowering Parents, Empowering Communities (EPEC) model to pilot a programme focused on dads. Being a Dad was a parent-led parenting programme for fathers of children aged between 2-11 years-old in Lewisham, Lambeth, Southwark, Bromley and Croydon.



A total of 21 dads took part in the eight-week online course and email support offer, which completed in July 2022. Evaluation data showed that from dad's taking part, improvement outcomes (e.g. parenting goals, wellbeing and concerns about children) are over and above the national and local combined norms.

Following involvement in the programme, two dads took up EPEC training to become EPEC parent group leaders and are now delivering groups to dads and parents in their area – demonstrating the ongoing impact of the work.

The learnings from our Being a Dad pilot have contributed to the wider roll out of EPEC national and the dads that deliver groups locally are now running a termly perinatal dads group (alongside mums being offered Baby and Us group). There is an ongoing commitment in both south east and south west London to rolling out EPEC and enabling access to support to both mums and dads in the community run by trained parents from the community.

"We valued the support to pilot dad specific groups and have benefitted from recruiting and training dad parent group leaders for both dad specific and general groups. The feedback from the groups has been incredible - one of many below."

Jo Nicoll, Joint Head of Centre for Parent and Child Support and lead for Empowering Parents Empowering Communities

Being a Dad
online support by dads for dads

January-March 2022

Scan code or email:
EPECproject@slam.nhs.uk

"It really helped me de-stress and succeed at some of the hard dad-stuff"

Good parenting ideas based on science, research & experience
NHS

Weekly bite-sized nuggets
Dad MOTs with a dad parent group leader

"The 'togetherness' that I experience with the group leaders and other dads really helped me feel that I wasn't in this alone. Learning the various strategies to approach parenting has aided in my self-awareness which is helping to improve my family relationships."

Being a Dad programme participant

Advantage Programme

We supported a pilot of the Advantage programme, a mentoring programme designed to support young people aged 14-21 years-old through collaboration with the charity Advantage, the South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust and Palace for Life Foundation, the official Crystal Palace FC Charity.



10 young people (14-21 years-old) were supported between April 2022 to November 2022. By focusing on helping to re-establish aspirations and a sense of connection, young people receive ongoing individual mentoring support for up to six months from trained youth workers who are in turn supported by a CAMHS practitioner through weekly supervision.

3 young people that completed the programme through Palace for Life agreed to contribute to a wider evaluation of the Advantage programme run by the Anna Freud Centre. Positive improvements were seen in outcomes including; better functioning, decrease in stress levels, improved mental well-being and progress on achieving agreed goals. Young people were also signposted to other Palace for Life programmes to continue their development and support in-line with their needs and interests.

“The Advantage programme pilot in Croydon enabled us to test out our approach in a new area with amazing impact. We know the level of need locally and glad we could deliver something innovative that has been extended beyond the initial pilot to support even more young people! Seven clubs are delivering on the programme currently. There are 14 in London Advantage could potentially be working with.

**Konrad Deckers Dowber,
Managing Director, Advantage
Mentoring CIC**

Improving the CAMHS waiting experience

Across south London there is widespread agreement on the need to improve the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) waiting list experience. There is a good commitment too to provide more contact and support for young people and families at this critical time across many south London trusts.

From our listening, we have heard of the significant challenges young people, parents and carers faced navigating the wait. Working with communities, we carried out the following in response:

Publication of CAMHS waiting times

All three mental health trusts committed to publishing their CAMHS waiting times, so everyone, especially parents and young people, can access them and make more informed decisions about the support they need. In October 2022, we celebrated the progress South West London and St George's Mental Health NHS Trust made in having their waiting times visible, and Oxleas followed suit. Work is still ongoing at South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust to publish their CAMHS waiting times, but they reaffirmed their commitment to do so at the South East London Community Health Assembly in November 2023.

CAMHS Virtual Waiting Room

We brought together mental health trusts with local partners, including schools and teachers, to explore how to implement the community ask of a 'virtual waiting room' to improve the ways young people are communicated with and supported whilst they are on the CAMHS waiting list. We created a set of requirements and explored how existing initiatives across the Trusts are working to meet them.

In 2023, we were delighted to be able to launch a CAMHS virtual waiting room called myHealthE. Developed in partnership with the CAMHS Digital Lab at King's College London's Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology & Neuroscience it has been rolled out across Croydon, Lambeth, Lewisham, and Southwark.



Over 7,500 families now have access to this service through myHealthE, which includes new video content and resources curated by CAMHS clinicians to provide information whilst on the wait list and signposting to additional services, for example Kooth. Work continues to take place to support engagement with schools and community leaders to promote the resource – and support the development of a version for older children.

Sharing best practice across south London NHS trusts

Building on the success of myHealthe, we are delighted that the three mental health trusts in south London, through the South London Partnership, have begun working together to explore how to build on developments with our CAMHS virtual waiting room. Two working groups are being developed. The first will focus on resource co-ordination and content curation, aiming to align and improve communications with families and young people across south London. The second will explore the data requirements for shared digital platforms.



“I believe that through the advent of the CAMHS virtual waiting room for young people shows that our message ‘mental health matters’ is being heard. Updating young people...means they do not feel forgotten or neglected. It also allows each person to know that they are not just a number reported at the end of each year but instead they are individually treasured - this change means young people will know that their mental health and wellbeing is valuable.”

Nenneh, a mental health ambassador in Year 11 from a school in Southwark

“This is a fantastic development born from active listening and co-creating this practical tool with local community leaders, parents and young people to help whilst young people are waiting for a specialist CAMHS assessment or treatment.”

**Martin Wilkinson,
Chief Operating Officer,
Partnership Southwark, NHS
South East London**

Our future plan for...

In November 2023, South London Listens partners committed to the following:

- We pledge to work with young people and parents over next 12 months to co-produce an action plan and that will improve engagement with those families and young people waiting for a CAMHS appointment.
- To meet with the community to hear the experience of leaders from Be Well Schools on how to collaborate and better integrate the range of mental health and wellbeing service offerings available to children and young people.
- For local authorities to maintain up-to-date sign posting including resources for parents.
- To map spaces owned by anchor institutions that would be suitable for community groups to book, over the next 12 months, and meet with communities to discuss how these can be made available for groups to use.

What we will do

- Having developed our CAMHS virtual waiting room across four boroughs in south east London in 23/24, we will work with the CAMHS Digital Lab team to build awareness

of the new product, alongside school and community leaders. We will also support the launch of an adolescent version of the virtual waiting room, completing the work later in the year.

- We will be working with CAMHS colleagues across south London to deliver on our pledge to co-produce an action plan that will improve engagement with families and young people waiting for a CAMHS appointment. This will involve working with communities to understand the challenges they face in greater detail and then bringing them together with health service leads to share best practice and explore opportunities to improve engagement in partnership.
- Through our Be Well programme, we will be publishing our schools strategy, working with CAMHS colleagues to integrate our work so that it supports all the important work taking place across south east and south west London. This will involve developing our partnership with the Maudsley Education Consultancy. We are currently working together with three Haberdashers schools in Lewisham to launch a research pilot exploring parent and student engagement around mental health. If successful, we will then explore opportunities to scale up the work.



Priority four

Access to mental health services for migrants, refugees and diaspora communities



For many people in south London, Covid-19 brought on new mental health challenges - or made existing challenges worse. The need to improve access to appropriate services and support has never been greater. This increased need is particularly felt by those who already experience disadvantage in our society, particularly Black, African, Caribbean and mixed heritage communities, and migrants, refugees, and diaspora groups.

Since November 2021, we have been working with our NHS and local authority partners on the following pledges:

November 2021 Action Plan pledges

- Invest in mental health practitioners embedded in community organisations, to build trust and provide services for refugee, migrant and diaspora communities.
- Work towards developing a culturally competent workforce.
- Encourage your local GP surgeries to register as 'safe surgeries'.



November 2022 pledges

- Community Embedded Worker - for each mental health trust to meet with us to discuss the findings of the Community Embedded Worker pilot and take action to build upon this model across the communities you serve.
- Safe Surgeries - for each mental health trust to endorse the safe surgery campaign and work with us to encourage GP surgeries to actively embed the Safe Surgeries guidance.

This is how we responded:

Community Embedded Workers

From our listening, we know that Black, African, Caribbean and mixed heritage communities, and migrants, refugees, and diaspora groups experience a range of significant challenges when accessing NHS services. With communities, we committed to an innovative 'community embedded worker' pilot to fill this gap in support.

In our 18-month pilot we funded three NHS mental health practitioners to work one day per week across five community organisations in Lambeth, Lewisham, and Southwark. The Community Embedded Workers adapted their role to meet the needs of the organisations and communities they were working in. Activity included delivering one-to-one and group advice sessions, supporting people with referrals to mental health services, developing culturally relevant material and resources and helping existing staff to provide low-level support through training so that the benefits of the work can be maintained at a local level.



List of organisations

Lewisham Migrant and Refugee Network (LRMN)

Surrey Square Primary

Spring Community Hub

Christian International Peace Service (CHIPS)

South London Refugee Association (SLRA)

Case study

Having Laura embedded in Lewisham Refugee Migrant Network has given refugees and migrants a direct, compassionate and effective route into mental health services.

Many of our clients have concerns about accessing health, particularly mental health, services. Laura has been a friendly and approachable face for them to have initial contact with and discuss options, dispelling concerns and giving them faith that statutory mental health services are open to them. Laura has also offered invaluable advice and guidance to caseworkers supporting clients with mental health problems.

Alan Robertson, CEO at LRMN

The impact we've had:

86

clients were supported in one-to-one sessions and over

100+

people involved in group activities

40

clients referred to mental health services

38

gained access to mental health services (like Talking Therapies)

19

further signposted to community services

100+

people involved in wider group work

65

undocumented migrants attended online session with the Community Embedded Worker in Lambeth

The Community Embedded Workers have been able to work with services to adapt their approach, as well as create new or tailored support opportunities to respond to needs. This includes:

- Working with NHS Talking Therapies service to develop a pathway for 30 clients to access talking therapies and relevant mental health services for the first time.
- Trialing the delivery in the community of a previously internal NHS Critical Incident Staff Support service, to support leaders to deal with a stabbing that had a huge impact on residents.
- Supporting good outcomes for people who have been housed successfully and have access mental health services after years of being homeless and not having access to health appointments.
- Increasing awareness and knowledge sharing among NHS teams – through training sessions by voluntary sector staff, and the inclusion of our pilot in an NHS course on how to engage with different people and communities to reduce inequalities, which over 2,000 people have enrolled in.
- Holding a roundtable with the NHS service leads to explore key barriers and potential solutions, looking particularly at language barriers and translation and the delivery of trauma-informed practice.



Read the full evaluation report



Safe Surgeries

Since 2021, we've been working with community leaders to champion and drive the Safe Surgeries initiative across south London, supporting GP practices to take steps to tackle the barriers faced by many migrants in accessing healthcare.



Community leaders have worked with NHS leaders to increase awareness of the programme and support sign up. Since 2021, we have seen a 100 per cent increase in surgeries signed up – with a total of 240 now registered.



Alongside this, community leaders carried out an audit of GP practices to understand how the initiative is being rolled out and understand challenges faced. Based on the learning, a range of important new commitments were made by the Integrated Care Boards to improve implementation of the work. This includes promises to work with community leaders to co-produce and disseminate a patient advocacy guide so migrants can better understand their healthcare rights; embed Safe Surgery champions at a local level to support and encourage GP practices to enact safe surgery guidance; and exploring the establishment of a cross-borough network so surgeries can support each other on work around health inequalities. New training has already been carried out with 80 practices and work is ongoing to drive the initiative.

“It’s brilliant that the Safe Surgeries scheme is being implemented, but I think it’s really important that this continues and is rolled out to all GP practices, if possible, as it really makes a huge difference to those individual patients.”

Dr Shazia Munir, a Lambeth GP who specialises in health inclusion, emphasised the value of the Safe Surgeries initiative

Our future plan for access to mental health services for migrants, refugees and diaspora communities

In November 2023, South London Listens partners committed to the following:

- Integrated Care Boards pledge to continue to support the Safe Surgeries campaign by championing existing work taking place across both ICBs related to 1) the creation of a Patient Advocacy Guide, 2) the creation of Safe Surgeries Champions, and 3) the development of a community of practice on Safe Surgeries.
- We pledge to build on Community Embedded Worker pilot for a full-time pilot in one or two boroughs and share the evaluations with NHS trusts beyond South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust.
- We pledge to support development of Be Well organisations offer focused on tackling racial disparities – increasing work with partners.
- We pledge to convene a working group to ensure migrant families can access the secondary care that they are entitled to.

What we will do

- We are going to be building on the incredible progress made in recruiting Safe

Surgeries – and the commitments from NHS partners to expand the work.

- Our patient advocacy guide will be published in spring/summer 2024 and we will be ensuring wide communication and dissemination. We will continue to develop our community of practice on Safe Surgeries and Safe Surgeries Champions, working with community leaders, our colleagues at the ICBs and Doctors of the World to further roll out and ensure implementation of the initiative. We will produce a report of progress and next steps in March 2025.
- We are delighted that South London and Maudsley has committed to developing a new full-time role and exploring how to implement this model across the four Boroughs it serves. We will be supporting this roll out, as well as working across the ICBs and NHS trusts to share best practice and explore wider opportunities to build on the work through 2024/25.
- Through the South London Listens Taskforce we will be mapping our Be Well work across each of our boroughs to explore potential alignment with existing initiatives to tackle racial disparities. A core element of work will be the delivery an evaluation of Be Well pilot in Lewisham with Goldsmiths working to co-design the Goldsmiths Wellbeing Clinic, a free-to-users wellbeing clinic, providing therapy, especially for racially and religiously minoritised service users locally which will be launching in 2024.

Priority Five

Housing



Since we began our work, the issue of housing has been a consistent theme coming through projects on our four original priority areas - particularly through the work of our Be Well organisations.

This was amplified by the Going Deeper community listening campaign we carried out in the summer of 2023. We consistently heard that housing is a key issue affecting the physical and mental health of south London communities. Poor conditions in the private

and social rented sectors, rising housing costs, the stress of precarious and insecure housing tenure, as well as the health impact of homelessness (including people in temporary accommodation) were all issues impacting some of our most vulnerable communities.





Recognising the significant impacts and the need for action, we worked with community leaders and our South London Listens and South East London Anchor Programme partners to explore our role in tackling the issue. This led to an important commitment from both Integrated Care Boards at our Community Assemblies in November 2023. Together they committed to the following pledge:

- We recognise that housing is a building block of health and pledge to work with system partners to consolidate the evidence base on the impact of housing on people’s health, to help us identify collaborative solutions to the health impact of housing, including the NHS’s contribution.

As part of Going Deeper, several potential solutions were identified and have been championed by community leaders.

These ideas have the potential to make a real difference to reducing impact that poor and insecure housing has on people’s health and wellbeing. These solutions include:

- 1. Strengthen community power around housing and health issues.**
- 2. Embed housing advocacy within health services that support people with housing-adjacent health needs.**
- 3. Strengthen the role of the NHS as an anchor institution in supporting the creation of affordable housing.**
- 4. Strengthening the role of the health system in identifying housing issues.**

What we will do:

- Since November 2023, we have begun working on a specific housing and health project. We have created a targeted programme of work aimed at reducing housing-related health inequalities. Taking a partnership approach it will build on existing work and identify where the health system

can make an impact of housing insecurity and homelessness, while supporting community power and voice in work to address housing-related health inequalities. We will be mapping existing best practice work relating to the solutions above and bringing together the community with NHS and Local Authority decision-makers to develop a plan of action by the end of 2024.



Acknowledgements

We would like to thank all our advisors, partners and our funders of this work to-date. This includes NHS Charities Together, the south east London and south west London Integrated Care Boards, Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust, South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust, and South West London and St George's Mental Health NHS Trust.

Huge thanks to our South London Listens partners



CROYDON



citizensuk



South London Listens, South London Acts: Next steps

We're delighted that strong progress has been made in delivering against priorities and actions identified by communities since 2020 – and we are determined to make further progress, as we build this powerful movement together through to 2030. We know there is so much more that needs to be done.

At our Assembly in November 2023, NHS and local authority leaders made clear long-term commitments to continuing to build stronger relationships, share power, listen to their communities, co-produce solutions, and take action to overturn the inequalities which have a devastating impact on mental health and wellbeing.

We have already begun delivering against the important commitments made to our communities, as set out in this report, working with our South

London Listens partners. This work will be guided by our Taskforce and we will be hosting Borough focused meetings to ensure we can strengthen local relationships and align and support existing initiatives.

Alongside delivering plans for 2024/25, we will be working to increase the reach of our programme and use our model to work with an even wider range of partners, so that we can utilise our collective power to truly build a healthier and fairer south London.

**South
London
Listens**



Find out more at

www.southlondonlistens.org

T: 020 3228 2830

E: contact@southlondonlistens.org

To everyone involved in South London Listens so far, thank you.
What you have told us has shaped our priorities and your commitment has helped us achieve so much.