



EAST LONDON CARES

WINTER WELLBEING

2019/20 EVALUATION REPORT



Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Our approach	6
3. Project in numbers	8
4. Case studies	9
5. Project strengths	15
6. Recommendations for future projects	17
7. Covid-19 response	19
8. Conclusion	20

1. Introduction

East London has long been renowned for its rich history, diversity and creative culture. In the last twenty years, it's also become known for its world-class restaurants, nights out, designer shops and soaring rents and house prices. Trends including globalisation, gentrification, digitisation, transience and housing bubbles have transformed our communities faster than ever before.

This rapid pace of change can be isolating, with many feeling left behind by – rather than part of – the transformations. For our older neighbours in Hackney and Tower Hamlets, many of whom face digital exclusion and live in poverty (Tower Hamlets has the highest rate of pensioner poverty in England)¹, this isolation can be particularly acute, and exacerbated, in the colder and darker months. During the winter period it can be harder to meet up with friends and family, or access local services, leading to more pronounced feelings of disconnection and loneliness.

That's why East London Cares, which opened in September 2019, began its first Winter Wellbeing project in October 2019. The project is part of East London Cares' wider vision to reduce isolation and loneliness in younger and older neighbours in Hackney and Tower Hamlets; to improve neighbours' confidence, connection, belonging, purpose and power; and to reduce the gaps across social, generational, digital and attitudinal divides. We do this year-round through our free Social Clubs, which bring younger and older east Londoner together to share conversation, laughter, skills and new experiences. We also connect younger and older neighbours one-to-one through our Love Your Neighbour friendship programme which helps neighbours to build meaningful long-term relationships across the generations.

During the winter months, when cold weather means our older neighbours may have to choose between heating and eating, and when icy roads and an increased chance of falls mean people choose to stay indoors and opportunities for interaction are limited, we intensify our outreach to identify people aged over 65 who are isolated or at risk of isolation.

¹ Tower Hamlets borough profile, 2018:
https://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/Documents/Borough_statistics/Research-riefings/BP2018_3_Poverty.pdf

During our first Winter Wellbeing project, which ran from October 2019 to March 2020, we connected with older neighbours on doorsteps, in supermarkets, at bus-stops, in chemists, GP surgeries and sheltered housing units and at community events.

We worked in a preventative way, not only engaging with those needing high levels of support, but also those who may have smaller problems or be at risk of isolation, helping them out before their needs escalated. We struck up conversations, built relationships, and then supported older neighbours to **stay warm, active and connected – through a combination of interactions, interventions, casework and referrals** onto local services and our own Social Clubs and Love Your Neighbour programmes.



“[This] will change the lives of so many of our residents and it’s great to make use of the underused spaces as well as opening up our estates to the wider community.”

Community partner

As part of the Winter Wellbeing project, East London Cares:

- **Delivered free warm items** – hats, gloves, warm socks, flasks, blankets and hot water bottles – so neighbours struggling with the cold could stay warm.
- **Gave small grants of up to £100** to neighbours whose circumstances were particularly difficult, to help with winter-related spends such as higher heating bills, warm winter clothes and bedding, and food shopping. Criteria for the eligibility and value of the grant included:
 - People living alone;
 - People on pension-only income;
 - People with recently changed circumstances, for example who recently had suffered illness or bereavement;
 - People with high spending on fuel bills due to cold homes;
 - People with pre-existing health conditions.
- **Referred older people** to organisations such as SHINE and Friends of the Elderly so they could receive more help to keep warm (including home insulation), and further financial support.
- **Connected older people to other local organisations** such as lunch clubs, free social groups, befriending organisations and exercise classes.
- **Signed older neighbours up** to our free Social Clubs and Love Your Neighbour programmes.
- **Signposted, referred, and linked older neighbours** to other wellbeing and health organisations such as Talk Changes, Mind and Tower Hamlets Talking Therapies.



“When you’re not feeling your best in the winter it can be even harder to move around and keep warm. These will be a huge help.”

Pauline, 77

2. Our approach

As a foundation for East London Cares' first Winter Wellbeing project, and in collaboration with partners, we identified seven target areas: Bethnal Green, Haggerston, Shoreditch, Roman Road, Columbia Road, Clapton and Hackney Downs. Leaflets and posters were distributed in a variety of places, including pharmacies, GP surgeries, supermarkets, notice boards at places of worship, cafes and local corner shops.

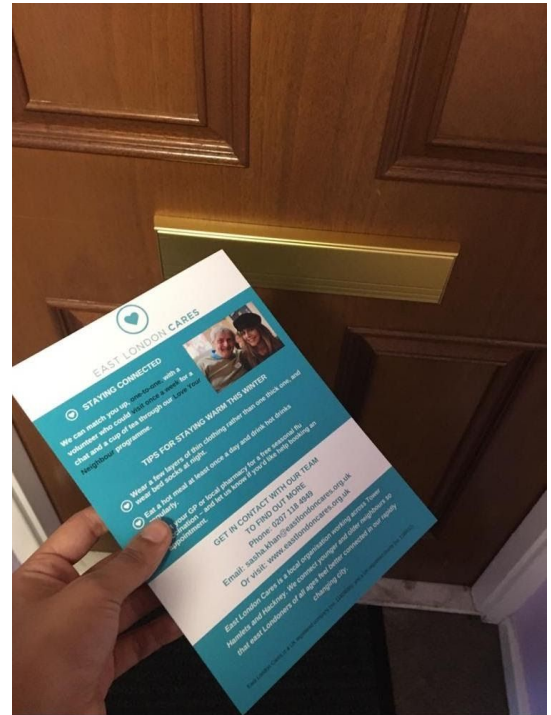
Following the initial poster and leaflet distribution, face-to-face outreach took place in each of the initial target areas, including through:

- **Connecting with housing associations:** in particular we worked with Tower Hamlets Homes to knock on doors and conduct targeted street outreach around their estates in the north of Tower Hamlets, and with the housing association Anchor Hanover to knock on doors and attend outreach engagements at eight of their sheltered housing units in Hackney.
- **Giving talks at local community group meetings,** including Posh Club, a Health and Wellbeing event for Somali residents, Women's Institutes groups, exercise classes, lunch clubs and coffee mornings.
- **Striking up one-to-one conversations** with people aged over 65 at bus-stops, on park benches and in supermarkets.
- **Building connections with local organisations** to help us disseminate information about the Winter Wellbeing project and the support East London Cares can provide, to learn about their services and to create new or expanded referral pathways. During the Winter Wellbeing project we met with 121 local organisations.



Organisations we connected with included:

- Age UK East London
- Compassionate Neighbours
- Connect Hackney
- First Love Foundation foodbank
- GoodGym (Tower Hamlets, and Hackney)
- Hackney Brocals
- Hackney CVS
- Hackney Council
- Hackney Dudes
- Idea Stores
- Ocean Regeneration Trust
- Oxford House
- Shoreditch Trust
- Social Action for Health
- Sonali Gardens
- St. Hilda's
- St. John's Church
- St. Margaret's House
- The Carers Centre Tower Hamlets
- Tower Hamlets Council
- Tower Hamlets GP Care Group CIC
- Tower Hamlets Social Care Forum
- Toynbee Hall
- Transform Shoreditch
- Victoria Park Community Centre



We also created a signposting directory so we could meet the needs of the older people we met as efficiently as possible. This includes over 100 organisations to help with wide-ranging interventions from exercise and wellbeing, to grants and practical support and Dementia-related support.

3. Project in numbers

From October 2019 to March 2020, East London Cares:

- Had face-to-face conversations with **803 older people** about our programmes, and how we could support them through our Winter Wellbeing project. Our target was to reach 350 people, so we exceeded this by 129%.
 - Of those, **a third (33%)** received at least one deeper intervention from us – **267 older people** in total.
- Made **505 deeper interventions** in total. Our target was to make 290 interventions: we exceeded this by 74%. These interventions included:
 - Delivering **206 free warm items** including thermal socks, hats, gloves, blankets, flasks and hot water bottles to older people in their homes. Initially we set out to deliver 50 free warm items, but due to the high need and demand from older neighbours, we increased this;
 - Awarding **9 grants of up to £100** (a total of **£580**) to people struggling with poverty and rapidly changing circumstances related to winter which might deepen isolation, anxiety, ill-health or disconnection;
 - Matching **2 older people** with younger neighbours for weekly visits, as part of our one-to-one friendship matching programme, Love Your Neighbour, which began in January;
 - Identifying and signing up **232 older neighbours** to our Social Clubs;
 - Hosting **60 free face-to-face Social Clubs** across Tower Hamlets and Hackney from October 2019 to the end of March 2020, attended **359 times by 116 older neighbours** and **262 times by 106 younger neighbours**.
- Distributed **2,133 leaflets**, spreading the word about our programmes, as well as seasonal messaging on how to stay warm and maintain positive wellbeing over the winter months.
- Gave talks at **19 community events**, knocked on **145 doors** in housing estates and sheltered housing units, and received **133 phone calls** from older people who had found our leaflets placed in community spaces such as libraries, GP surgeries, supermarkets, chemists and betting shops during proactive street outreach, who then signed up to programmes
- Created partnerships **with over 100 local community organisations** in Hackney and Tower Hamlets for joint working and cross-referral pathways.



4. Case studies

While the numbers are crucial, they don't tell the whole story of the Winter Wellbeing project. Central to the project is the focus on the individual: a person-centred approach which allowed us to identify older neighbours who needed extra connection, ensured appropriate time and effort was spent on each person (with no time limits to follow-ups), and which led to trust and lasting relationships and revealed complex problems before they became crises.

The challenges of the people we supported were unique and personal each time. Below are a selection of case studies of people we helped out. In each case, the older person had diverse needs, of which warm items were only one small part. Our contact with people offered an entry point to other services and to the lasting connections we forge as part of the wider East London Cares programmes.

These are just a few of the stories of the 267 older neighbours Winter Wellbeing directly supported:

Elizabeth

We met Elizabeth, 81, at a Winter Warmer event hosted by Hackney Council. Elizabeth was one of 600 people who attended – to receive information on keeping warm, safe and active over the winter months. She was interested in our free warm items.



On delivering a flask, thermal socks, hot water bottle and blanket to her in her home, we were able to have a longer conversation about other difficulties Elizabeth was facing, including broken heating, a broken fridge and freezer, and a broken mattress which was causing her pain. Elizabeth's broken fridge and freezer meant that she had been having to store food on her balcony, in order to prevent it spoiling. Likewise, her broken central heating was leading to higher electricity spending due to her reliance on a small fan-heater. Elizabeth had also been a victim of a break-in a few years previously, and we were able to signpost her to Victim Support. While talking, she told us: ***"I used to***

travel and go to so many places with my friends – we went to Moscow, Beijing...we travelled the whole length of France by bus and camped. We were crazy! But over the years my friends have passed away, and now I sit and watch the television. But I love learning and no knowledge is ever wasted."

Through our contact with the Hackney Repairs Team, we were able to help Elizabeth report and resolve her broken heating: this had previously been a challenge for her as she does not have a mobile phone or computer. We also referred Elizabeth to SHINE, for small modifications to keep her home warmer. As well as this, we provided Elizabeth with a £100 grant to help with the higher electricity spends, meaning she did not have to make the difficult choice between spending money on food, or bills. And we successfully applied for a mattress and fridge-freezer for Elizabeth through the Friends of the Elderly grants scheme.

We were able to help socially too: having built trust with Elizabeth, she signed up to our free Social Clubs. On meeting with younger neighbours in the community, she told us: ***"I love learning and I love being with young people, they make me feel young myself."***

Pauline *

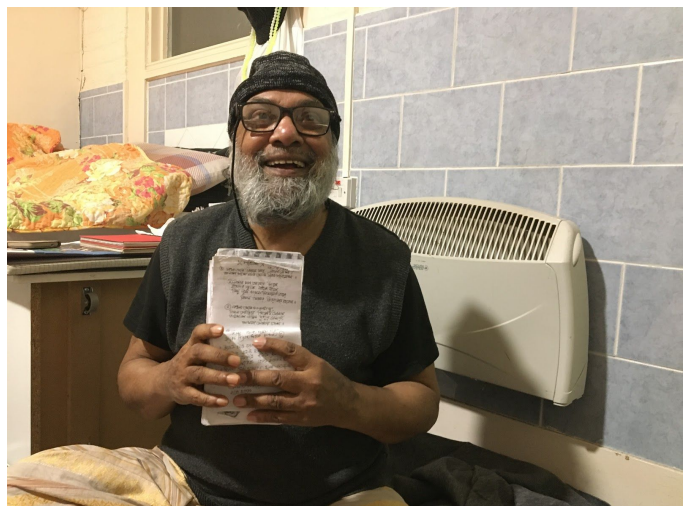
We first met Pauline, 76, after she phoned East London Cares in January. She had heard about us through GoodGym. It became clear through our initial conversation that Pauline was feeling isolated, telling us: ***“I really struggle with this time of year – it’s so dark and I find it really depressing. I wish I could go out, no one here talks to each other and I hate staying in. Just being between these four walls all day, it drives you mad.”***

Pauline explained she was cold and expressed interest in our free warm items, and we delivered these to her a few days later. We dropped around a blanket, flask, hot water bottle, hat and gloves, and got talking about some of the larger issues Pauline was facing. These included her broken central heating, difficulty organising transport which made getting out and about difficult (and therefore exacerbating feelings of isolation), difficulties accessing physical and mental health services, and worries regarding covering winter-related spends such as purchasing warm winter clothes.

We worked with Pauline’s housing providers on her behalf to get her heating repaired, and gave her a grant of £100 to assist with higher winter spending. We were also able to contact Dial-a-Ride and have them set her up with their free transport, enabling her to get out and about with more ease. We also referred Pauline to Re-Engage, Talk Changes and put her in touch with Healthwatch.

Mohammed

We met Mohammed (93) through our work with the Community Navigators based in Idea Stores in Tower Hamlets. After delivering Mohammed free warm items, he shared with us the issues he was facing in regards to his heating and housing generally, as well as feelings of loneliness. Showing us around, he was facing issues with leaks, damp and cold conditions in his home, which were leading to his health deteriorating and his wellbeing being affected.



Through the project, we were able to not only deliver Mohammed the free warm items to help keep him warm and comfortable, we were also able to award him a full £100 grant to help with his higher electrical spends. Likewise, we were able to get in touch with Tower Hamlets Council regarding the suitability of Mohammed's home. Previously he had submitted a re-housing request on the basis of poor health, but had not heard back. We have now picked this up for Mohammed, and are working with the council to look into improved accommodation for him.

Finally, Mohammed signed up to our free Social Clubs, to stay social and connected to his neighbours and community year-round. In March 2020, Mohammed attended his first Social Club – a fabric-printing group – with his younger and older neighbours. An accomplished writer, Mohammed has produced over 6,000 illustrated poems: in the coming months we hope Mohammed will facilitate a writing workshop for his new friends.

Maggie

Maggie (88) called up after finding out about us through a friend who had heard about us through our outreach at Victoria Park Community Centre. After coming along to her first Social Club, Maggie told us: ***“This is such a god-send. I usually only get outside once a week for a one-hour push about in Victoria Park. I’m so thrilled to have met East London Cares and to have the opportunity to attend so many exciting clubs!”***

Maggie was also the first older neighbour we matched through our one-to-one friendship matching programme, Love Your Neighbour. During the Covid-19 lockdown, Maggie's Love Your Neighbour friend, Lewis, aged 30, has been doing a regular food shop and prescription pick-up for her, and they've also been catching up on the phone. Once lockdown is over, the friends are looking forward to heading out together: Maggie is going to share her encyclopaedic knowledge of art, tutoring Lewis in everything from Rembrandt to Riley and helping him find some paintings for his new flat, and Lewis is going to help Maggie to get out to galleries and the park.



Neela

We met Neela, 69, in Hackney back in November, through a community outreach event. She told us she was interested in receiving some free warm items. We called around and dropped off a flask, blanket, pair of thermal socks, hot water bottle, hat and gloves.

Talking with Neela in her home, it became clear that she was in need of larger support, both to keep her home warm and comfortable, and also regular social connections. While Neela is often at medical appointments and having conversations with doctors and pharmacists, she told us how over the years she's lost touch with friends and family, with most of her conversations now being transactional. Previously her love of cooking had been central to maintaining social connections in her life. However, after her arthritis deteriorated, she told us: ***"friends no longer visit me, they don't want to. You can't cook for people... so I am often on my own"***.

We quickly got Neela signed up to our Social Clubs, many of which are local to her. However, originating from Mauritius, Neela wanted to find something local and social that could allow her to connect with other French-speaking people. After some research, we managed to find a Hackney-based lunch club for people aged 50 and over who are French-speaking. We were able to ring the lunch club on behalf of Neela during a home visit, to make sure all of her questions about the group were answered so that she felt confident in attending. Neela is now able to connect with people again over mutual love of language and food.

Neela was also awarded a full Winter Wellbeing grant in the form of Argos vouchers, which she used to buy much-needed warm bedding. We have also successfully applied for a larger £400 Friends of the Elderly grant on her behalf, to go towards further home improvements to keep her warmer. Throughout the Covid-19 lockdown, we've also supported Neela by arranging eight food parcels specific to her dietary needs.

Cora

We met Cora, 81, when we were door-knocking on her housing estate in October. After a chat on the doorstep, Cora invited us into her home, and shared that, ***"When you get to my age, well, most of my friends have passed away. My husband of 50 years died in 2016."***

You don't get invites anymore. These social clubs will be something to look forward to."

Although Cora signed up to several social clubs, she never made it along due to ill-health. But we kept in touch, and in January, we went back to visit her. While we were visiting, Cora told us: "I keep the TV on. It's company for me". Through our Love Your Neighbour programme, we matched Cora with Elena, aged 25, for weekly visits. During the Covid-19 lockdown, the new friends have been chatting over the phone each week, and the pair have formed a genuine and mutually beneficial friendship, with Cora telling us, **"the company, the conversation – it's just what I needed!"**

Jeewaun

In October we met Jeewaun, 81, at a LinkAge Plus coffee morning in Tower Hamlets, where he shared with us his love of food, and olive bread specifically, which he would often eat when he lived in Mauritius. Interested in exploring new social groups and free activities, he signed up to receive our Social Clubs programme through the post each month, and immediately put himself down for our Sourdough Bread-making club in Bethnal Green, where he got to make his beloved olive bread.

Over the course of the project Jeewaun attended 10 free Social Clubs, telling us after his first one, ***"This social club is like Christmas for me, I spend too much time alone and now I've found East London Cares, I can come to all your clubs. They're so much fun!"***



We also helped Jeewaun keep warm as well as connected, by dropping round a flask, hot water bottle, pair of gloves and socks, and awarding him a grant to go towards his heating bills and an electric blanket. Since the Covid-19 lockdown, we've trained Jeewaun on Zoom, and he now attends our virtual social clubs.

Devika

When we met Devika, 69, at a LinkAge Plus coffee morning, she shared that she was finding it difficult keeping warm in both her home and while going out to her social groups. We dropped round some free warm items – a hat, flask, hot water bottle, blanket and pair of gloves. Through the longer conversations we had with Devika in her home, she shared larger issues that were making keeping warm challenging, such as not having carpet or warm enough bedding. We awarded Devika an £80 grant to purchase new bedding, and also applied successfully for a larger grant from Friends of the Elderly for carpet to be put in her flat.



** Some names have been changed to protect the privacy of our older neighbours.*

5. Project strengths

East London Cares' first ever Winter Wellbeing project was both ambitious in its scope and personal in its approach. This combination of breadth and depth, while working in areas with the highest rates of pensioner poverty in England, made it a challenging project to deliver. But the project had many strengths, including:

- The number of people we reached: we exceeded our target by 129%, reaching 803 people.
- Our person-centred approach – taking time to build rapport and trust – worked: 33% of the people we spoke to opened up to ask for support. The delivery of free warm items to people's homes was also a useful tool for building trust: it allowed us to have conversations with older people in the comfort and privacy of their homes, meaning they shared issues they had not previously shared in a public setting. Therefore, we were able to make deeper interventions, including raising safeguarding concerns, applying for larger grants and housing-related interventions.
- By meeting with 121 of local organisations and establishing referral pathways, we were also able to effectively find help for older neighbours even when it was outside the scope of our work.

- The multi-faceted approach to our outreach: we didn't just knock on doors in sheltered housing units, we also approached people in supermarkets, many of whom lived in private housing and who otherwise would have been difficult to reach. We didn't just speak at community events, we also built links with primary care.
- We built strong relationships with community navigators who speak Bengali – important in an area such as Tower Hamlets, which is home to the largest Bangladeshi population in the country.²
- In telling the stories of people we met, and in real time, we managed to build up a strong online presence. This network of **1,054 social media followers** has now been inspired to look out for their older neighbours.



“I don't want to be with just people my age. The mix of ages offers something new. At these events I can share history about my area with them.”

Indrani, 69

“I really enjoyed last night...I'm so glad I went! I felt all energised afterwards. I thought it was just so good and what a lovely mix of people! I loved meeting all the younger neighbours, it really brought the place to life. I'm really looking forward to all the ones to come.”

Jill, 70



² Tower Hamlets borough profile, 2018: https://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/Documents/Borough_statistics/Research-briefings/Population_2_BP_2018.pdf



6. Recommendations for future projects

As with any start-up project, we have learnt a lot. Below are some of the challenges we encountered and our recommendations for improving Winter Wellbeing and deepening its impact in future. While the shape of the next Winter Wellbeing project is yet to be determined and the Covid-19 pandemic is presenting new challenges in the community, we nevertheless have learnt valuable lessons that we can apply to both face-to-face and remote outreach.

- **Area for improvement:** Our programmes and network of older and younger neighbours built up during the project do not currently reflect the diversity of the boroughs we work in. For example, a third of people living in Tower Hamlets are Bengali, which is not reflected in the constituency of people we engaged with in the borough.

Recommendation: While East London Cares was working on a strategy to address this imbalance before face-to-face programmes were suspended amid Covid-19, we would recommend for future projects that this is outlined at the start, with cultural centres and places of worship identified for outreach engagements. This likewise feeds into our desire to address language barriers during outreach, and to have as

part of this strategy a sustainable way of using interpreters and Bengali-speaking younger neighbours to widen our reach in our Love Your Neighbour and Social Club programmes, and future Winter Wellbeing projects.

- **Area for improvement:** Widening our reach. Through our partnership work with Tower Hamlets Homes, we were able to establish a deep presence in the north of the borough. However, ahead of the next project, we would like to expand this to the south of the borough, and conduct more targeted outreach in the areas of Shadwell, Limehouse, Whitechapel and Chrisp Street.

Recommendation: East London Cares can conduct more outreach engagements in the south of the borough, by building more relationships with community centres, GP surgeries, identifying more areas for street outreach, and continuing to reach out to sheltered housing units to carry out more door-knocking.

- **Area for improvement:** reaching more people not already connected with local groups and services.

Recommendation: With more lead-in time for the next Winter Wellbeing project and our learning from this year, we would like to have a higher presence at flu jab clinics in GP waiting rooms, to conduct more supermarket and street outreach, and to work more in private housing to find older people not already linked with other community projects.

- **Area for improvement:** increasing self-referrals and referrals from family members.

Recommendation: Ahead of next year's project, we would like to better utilise media to widen the reach of our storytelling, and to reach more younger and older east Londoners. Although most of our older neighbours are not online, this also includes diversifying further than print media, to blogs, magazines, podcasts and online publications too – so people who are online can spread the word to friends, family and neighbours who are not.

- **Area for improvement:** Bringing planning forward. East London Cares only started in September 2019, and our project began at the beginning of October 2020.

Recommendation: For our next project, we will begin project planning in summer, reaching out to potential partners well before the project begins, to ensure we can spend more time out and about, speaking to older neighbours, while the project is running.

7. Covid-19 response

East London Cares suspended face-to-face programmes on March 13th and put in place Covid-19 response programmes. From March 13th to March 31st, we made check-in calls with **95 older neighbours** and made **36 deeper interventions**, including supporting with practical support. We quickly carried out a food and prescription delivery pilot project, delivering urgent supplies to older neighbours before other support was in place.



We also began holding virtual Social Clubs online using Zoom: from March 13th to March 31st, we held three virtual clubs as a pilot. This learning led us to develop our Phone a Friend project, linking older and younger neighbours for regular phone calls. We also developed a monthly Virtual Social Club programme with additional phone-in functions for those without an internet connection.

Along with the wider Cares Family (which includes North London Cares, South London Cares, Manchester Cares and Liverpool Cares), East London Cares produced an Alone Together pack of daily activities which in March was **sent out to 283 older people here in Hackney and Tower Hamlets**. This work will be evaluated elsewhere, but we include it here to emphasise the importance of the relationships we built during the Winter Wellbeing project: by identifying people at risk of isolation during the winter months, we have been able to quickly support some of the people most isolated by lockdown during the Covid-19 crisis.

8. Conclusion

Through observing the Winter Wellbeing projects held at our sibling charities in The Cares Family, East London Cares went into our first major outreach project aware of how the winter months can be the most isolating time, and how the season can pose specific and substantial challenges for our older neighbours. We also went into the project aware of the contexts of our home boroughs of Tower Hamlets and Hackney which have some of the highest rates of pensioner poverty in the UK.

It is thanks to the characteristically warm, creative and collaborative nature of east London, and the organisations and communities within it, that we were able to make the 436 interventions that we did. We are especially grateful for the partnership of Jobrul Islam at Tower Hamlets Homes and Ann Brolan of Anchor Hanover, who made crucial introductions to other organisations and individuals at the start of the project.

Arriving towards the end of the Winter Wellbeing project, the Covid-19 pandemic changed everything and it changed nothing. It revealed the extent of the loneliness and isolation that already existed in our boroughs, and it raised empathy for that experience of disconnection, but it deepened the broader effects of inequality. It is clear that, as we consider the post-pandemic recovery, deep consideration for reducing loneliness by increasing generational unity and solidarity will be key.

It will be key because, in the UK, **two fifths of all older people say television is their main company**³, while **almost a third of 18 to 24-year-olds have said they felt lonely often or all the time**⁴. Through bringing these groups together, not only do friendships form, but people can deepen their sense of connection to their communities, and people can get to know the people they've lived side-by-side with, but never spoken to.

Cora's story illustrates the point. When we met Cora during this project, she told us: ***"When you get to my age, well, most of my friends have passed away. My husband of 50 years died in 2016. You don't get invites anymore. These social clubs will be something to look forward to."*** Since that conversation, Cora has been matched with

³ Campaign to End Loneliness, <https://www.campaigntoendloneliness.org/loneliness-research/>

⁴ The Independent, <https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/loneliness-young-people-yougov-friendship-adults-a9133706.html>.

younger neighbour Elena, 25, who told us: ***"Mondays are normally very busy and stressful for me. I'm so happy that I now have a visit with Cora to look forward to at the end of the day."***

Due to the intensity of our work during the pandemic, East London Cares will go into 2020/21 with an even deeper understanding of our neighbours' challenges. We will be in a position to engage even more neighbours who are trapped behind closed doors, to expand the areas we work in, to widen diversity, and to continue to explore new methods of outreach to make the most meaningful interventions we can. We will also be in a stronger position to continue to champion the message that older and younger people coming together to form genuine friendships can bridge generational, attitudinal, digital and cultural divides, and is a mutually beneficial experience for younger and older people alike.