

**ROCKET
SCIENCE**



Primary Prevention in Battersea: A Social Return on Investment analysis of the Battersea Alliance

September 2024



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Need and priorities in Battersea



Background to this research

This work was commissioned by the Battersea Alliance to evidence the work it does in supporting the health and wellbeing of both local residents and the local community and voluntary sector.

There are significant challenges to public health at both national and local levels. [Lord Darzi's recent report](#) on health and social care underlined these challenges, finding surging waiting lists for community and mental health services, but a lack of investment in these areas.

There are also challenges with who health services are and are not reaching. The NHS reported that [1 in 5 appointments are for non-medical reasons](#) such as isolation, while [men and those from global majority groups are underrepresented](#) in GP visits in terms of access, continuity of care, and positive experiences.

Challenges are felt locally too. A needs analysis of Battersea conducted by the Alliance in 2021 identified a range of challenges that Battersea residents are more likely to face compared to residents in the wider Wandsworth area, including poverty, crowded conditions and isolation and loneliness.

The Wandsworth Health and Wellbeing Board, made up of Council leaders, local GPs, and the South West London Integrated Care Board have set out [a five-year strategy](#) to support the lives of residents and tackle the challenging public health environment. This strategy's three core tenets (Start Well, Live Well, Age Well) sets out actions and outcomes for the health and wellbeing of local children and young people, adults, and older people.

The Battersea Alliance can be a key player in delivering these outcomes through a method it has coined 'community prescribing'. The Alliance's highly relational approach means its member organisations (who are funded or supported through the Alliance) and those they support have developed the trust to cross-refer residents to their services, thereby better supporting residents' physical health, emotional health, and socio-emotional skill development.

The purpose of this work was to evidence these impacts, and therefore build a compelling case to funders to back the Alliance's work by supporting its continued investment in local organisations.



Meeting need in Battersea

The Wandsworth Health and Wellbeing Board’s [Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy](#) (JLHWS) is formed of nineteen issue-based steps, which set out required actions and target outcomes. The Battersea Alliance, through the support it provides its network of organisations, is already supporting five of these 19 steps.

JLHWS Step	JLHWS Identified Action	Battersea Alliance activity in this area
1	Preventing mental disorders and improving community resilience	Funding and collaborating with organisations to provide formal and informal opportunities for counselling and other wellbeing support.
10	Ensuring there is adequate provision of health promotion interventions	Funding and collaborating with organisations to deliver classes, workshops and events which focus on physical activity, healthy eating, and other healthy habits.
13	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Targeting and supporting inactive adults to become more active. 2. Identifying barriers to participation and reduce them where possible. 3. Creating pathways for inactive adults to take small steps or ‘doses’ of physical activity 	Funding and collaborating with organisations who deliver health and wellbeing projects to resident groups who may distrust or not wish to engage with other open-access, publicly funded services, such as young Black men or Muslim women, due to experiences and perceptions of institutional racism.
16	Raising awareness, signposting residents to support services/offers	Providing space for local organisations to come together, share resources, and build trust with each other. This trust and shared knowledge of local services better enables cross-referrals.
19	Building/investing in ‘ Social Capital ’ and the use of local networks and community assets to increase resilience.	Providing space for local organisations to come together, jointly manage volunteer load, collaborate on grant submissions, and tackle capacity challenges.



Building social capital in Battersea

Social capital is used to describe the “extent and nature of our connections with others and the collective attitudes and behaviours between people that support a well-functioning, close-knit society” ([ONS](#)). There is a growing focus on building social capital to improve the health and wellbeing of populations by creating better connected services.

The borough’s JLHWS and the [2023 needs analysis of Wandsworth’s voluntary and community sector](#) identified the need to build social capital at the grass roots level. The needs analysis highlighted that siloed working, a lack of trust, and a lack of awareness of local services is creating inefficient approaches to delivery. It calls for opportunities to strengthen VCS skills, capacity and resources as a result.

The Battersea Alliance exists for this purpose. Its relational approach poses it as an enabler of development within its network of organisation. By providing spaces for Battersea-based organisations to come together it is improving trust, knowledge, and the sharing of resources and skills across a variety of projects and programmes.

The Alliance is formed of seven member organisations who oversee its governance, these members are:

- Big Local SW11
- Providence House
- St Peter’s Church
- Katherine Low Settlement
- Carney’s Community
- Caius House
- Integrate Agency C.I.C.

It provides funding and support in several ways:

1. £300k invested funding two posts: Volunteer Coordination and Battersea Youth voice to improve engagement with volunteers and young people
2. £100k invested into the Community & Belonging Forum: 23 organisations delivering approaches to tackling depression, loneliness and isolation
3. £100k invested into the Covid recovery fund, supporting 30 organisations adapt to lockdowns and develop services in response to isolation and loneliness



The research brief

In 2023 the Battersea Alliance commissioned Rocket Science to conduct a social return on investment (SROI) analysis of its primary prevention interventions.

Our research aimed to:

- **Understand** the ways in which the Alliance's approach creates positive outcomes, what these outcomes are, and who experiences them;
- **Gather** data on these outcomes to estimate their scale and financial value.

For this we carried out consultation with the six Battersea Alliance members and several organisations who received support or funding through the Alliance.

What is a social return on investment?

An SROI is a technique for calculating the financial value of an intervention. The aim is to sum up the benefits in financial terms, and although SROIs work in monetary terms, they can include non-financial benefits (e.g. improved confidence, greater mental or physical health, etc.).

To do this financial 'proxies' are used. These proxies are created off the back of research by local government, public sector and third sector organisations and apply a monetary value to these non-financial impacts. Complete detail on the proxies we have used and where they are sourced from is included in our technical appendix, including the sources.

For this research, we have concentrated on identifying the social value of outcomes identified by users at several case-study organisations. We have not undertaken a detailed analysis of the input costs – for example looking at other financial or in-kind support that the case-study organisations have received.



Methodology overview

Benefits explored

This project has sought to understand two streams of benefits related to the Battersea Alliance:

- **Individual and community-level impacts** of funded projects themselves;
- **Wider impacts** of partnership working.

The first area of benefits involves the direct impacts of those local interventions which are supported by the Battersea Alliance.

The second stream of benefits relates to increased engagement and connections that have arisen from local organisations working in partnership and collaboration. These include generating wider social capital through an ecosystem of preventative support, both for service users and frontline professionals.

Case study approach

The following document uses a case study approach to tell the stories of 6 local projects. These case study narratives were compiled using a range of both qualitative and quantitative data, collected through interviews and surveys.

Given some barriers around engagement, certain projects have more substantive data than others. For example, the work of Guy's Room is reflected in two in-depth interviews with participants, whereas our analysis of Disco Dance is built on 11 participant survey responses. As a result, each case evidences the typical benefits that people experience, as opposed to the total scale of the Battersea Alliance's work.

The scale of impact across projects differs as some received more funding than others. The SROI should not then be taken as a competitive indicator of success, but instead an evidence towards the types of value and their related costs to be had in funding preventative, relational working.



SROI Methodology

The first step of the SROI was an analysis of all case study interviews and survey returns. These were reviewed for benefits identified by the interviewee / survey respondent. This identified a set of **22 different benefits** – some commonly identified in multiple case studies but others identified in just one – under four broad groupings of:

- Economic and employment
- Education
- Health and wellbeing
- Social and community

Research was carried out to identify proxies which could be used to assign a quantifiable value against each of these outcomes. Wherever possible, detailed and recent national-level research has been used as the source for proxy measures. Where no such proxy source has been found a deflator has been applied to guard against optimism bias in the figures provided. The year of the data source has also been considered, using CPI index data to provide an equivalent value in 2024-25 prices.

The benefits for each case study have then been adjusted for a set of three standard deflators (a fourth Displacement deflator was not felt to be relevant to any of the case studies):

- **Attribution** – the level of attribution for the benefit that can be given to the project’s activities rather than other support a person is receiving. Typically, attribution was clearer and more demonstrable from analysis of interviews rather than survey returns.
- **Deadweight** – the level of change that would have happened anyway without support.
- **Drop-off** – the level of benefit typically reduces as time passes after the initial change and so for levels of change over more than one year, a drop-off deflator was applied.

Finally, the duration of a benefit was also considered – where it was clear (particularly from case study interviews) that support had been long term and stable, a duration of up to five years was included. An MS Excel spreadsheet was then used to calculate the value of each benefit, using the adjusted proxy value multiplied by the deflators discussed above.



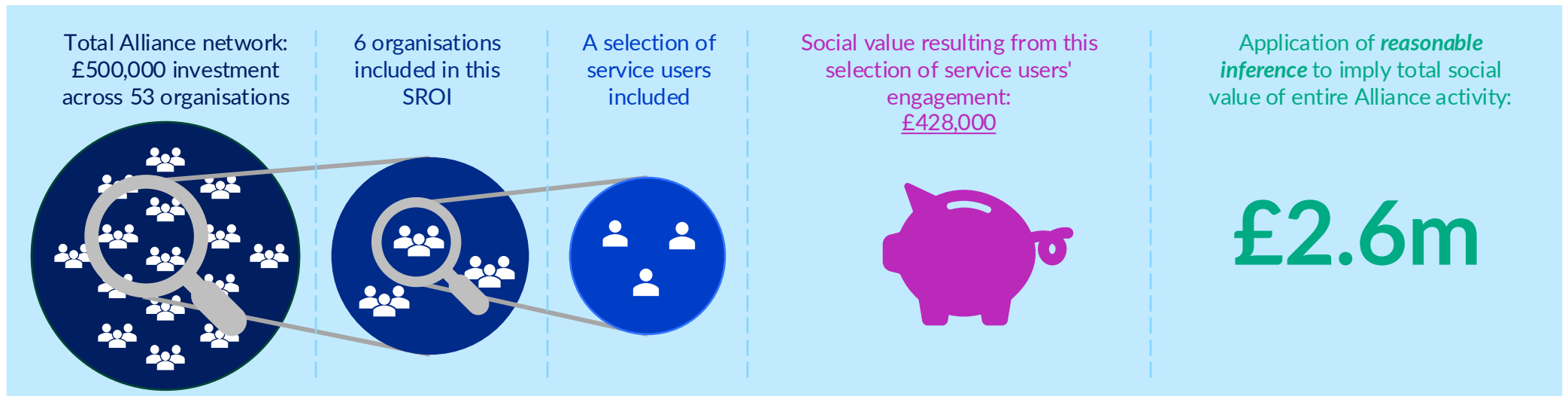
The impact of the Battersea Alliance



Overview of the impacts

Our consultation with Battersea Alliance members, supported organisations, and service users highlighted the varied impact the Alliance has and, crucially, the social value – in terms of social, environmental and financial benefits – it creates. We spoke to six of the 53 organisations the Alliance supported or funded, and our SROI analysis with a selection of service users calculated a **social value of £428,000 for these service users alone**. In total the Alliance has invested £500,000 across the 53 organisations it has supported, and it estimates £60,000 of this went into the six organisations included in this case study, followed by an estimated £20,000 of in-kind support. **This means for every pound invested, these services are generating around £5 in social return.**

We undertook a robust and cautious approach to arrive at these figures and, critically, took a 'bottom up' approach of talking to service users about their views on the difference that projects had made to them. Due to a lack of similar user-led data we cannot replicate this approach to robustly calculate the social value achieved by the totality of the Alliance's work, however using reasonable inference it implies a total social value of at least £2.6m across the Alliance's activities.





Overview of the impacts

The case studies in this report only scratch the surface of the Alliance's total impact. The service users we spoke to do not account for all service users at the organisations we spoke to, nor do the organisations we spoke to account for the breadth of the Alliance's activity. However through this research we found positive impacts on:

- Health and wellbeing
- Social and community
- Education
- Finances and employment

Anecdotal evidence captured through conversation with Alliance members highlights the varied impacts of other organisations engaged but not included in this SROI, for example:

- The work of **JCT**, which provides community support services including security patrols during flash points, mentoring for young people, and support for single parents and adults. Recently JCT stepped in when a 16-year old man was groomed by a local gang and arrested for possession of a knife. JCT's character reference and assurances of mentoring support saw the young man released. The average cost of a young person entering the criminal justice system is £140,000 a year.
- **I Sensory** supports 24 families to provide issue-based support for parents on a range of challenges, including educational support for SEN children.
- **Support4Support** ran after-school reading club to promote literacy, at its height supporting 40 children and families. It closed in 2024 due to a lack of funding.

We clearly need to be cautious about placing a social value on outcomes where we have not undertaken detailed analysis. However, it is reasonable to infer that the total social value of 53 rather than 6 case-study projects will be a multiple of the £428k social value identified in the case studies. Multiplying the £428k by a factor of four gives a very cautious overall social value of £2.6m.

Primary Prevention in Battersea

Delivering impact

Battersea Alliance's relational approach sits at the heart of its success at delivering impact. Given the limited capacity and community-led nature of the projects operating in Battersea, the Alliance chose to trust organisations to deliver outcomes without imposing stringent monitoring and evaluation processes upon them. The Alliance believes that over-prescribing such processes disempowers trust and would take away from these small organisations' ability to affect change with the groups they work with.

The Alliance's Community & Wellbeing Forum, a space for its supported and funded groups to come together, is also a key part of its relational approach and a factor behind its impact. At a time when community and voluntary sector resources and capacity are dwindling, the Forum brings organisations to share volunteers, resources, and work together on funding proposals.

This approach generates trust amongst and between Battersea Alliance members and its supported groups and has led to the wider development of local social capital. This is most notably seen in the prevalence of cross-referrals made within the network, something explored later in this report.



Battersea Alliance 2024 Festival
Photo credit: Sandra Munoz Alvarez



Where the funding goes: The Community and Belonging Forum (1)

The Community and Belonging Forum was established by the Battersea Alliance through the BLSW11 programme to develop new, innovative or pilot projects in Battersea that aim to tackle Isolation, Loneliness and Mental Health (Depression & Anxiety) by building social relationships and community connections. A total of £100,000 has been invested in these initiatives since inception.

Simultaneously, the Battersea Alliance created and distributed a Covid-19 Support Fund in which an additional £100,000 was spent during the pandemic to support 30 local organisations. This funding supported costs related to adapting into lockdown and developed services in response to the deepening isolation and mental health challenges.

Project	Description	Awarded to date (£)
FERA	Falcon Estate Residents Association community engagement programme to connect with the wider community and explore extending membership to Wayford Street	5,000
Guy's Room	Men's support group providing a safe environment to discuss issues (health, mental health, wellbeing).	5,000
Maysoule Road (1)	Street Party to foster community cohesion via engagement and participation	5,000
JCT	Street/estate patrols, providing support and guidance for young people; mentoring 3 to 5 young people	10,000
Maysoule Road (2)	Community Group formed to develop projects in the Maysoule Road area	5,000
Wilditch Centre	Community engagement seed funding to explore scope for local residents to take more of a lead in use and management of the Centre	1,000
New Tomorrow	Mapping community needs in Battersea – a facilitated workshop	500
Spirit of Women	A women's health & wellbeing project	7,000



Where the funding goes: The Community and Belonging Forum (2)

Project	Description	Awarded to date (£)
I Sensory	Support for SEN children and their families through a range of activities and events – start up funds for CIC	6,000
Battersea Befrienders	Two part project looking at how the work of Battersea Befrienders could be developed to offer training and support to groups in Battersea and develop Partnerships to share best practice while increasing the number befriended in Battersea	1,000
Support4Support	Children reading group held at York Gardens library – started with 14 now has 40+; funding to support start-up of CIC or charity – and gain relevant assurances/qualification in safeguarding, liabilities, first aid, etc	7,000
SW Lions	Newly formed football club with over 30 young people involved. Funding to provide kit and cover one year's worth of pitch fees to help get them established	4,400
Disco Dance	Relaunch of dance event (Deaba) held at Devas and aimed at 40+ to encourage socialising and building friendship groups	1,300
FC Battersea Foundation	Seed funding for charitable arm of FC Battersea	2,000
AGOE Empowerment Network	Supporting people with English as a second or third language to access services	7,000
Fitwell	A fitness and mental health programme for women from the Muslim community and all the communities in Battersea	5,000
Halfway Home	Support for young people - To provide a safe environment for children to build their self-confidence, resilience to tackle educational, health and mental health challenges	5,000
Moses	Support for production of Moses book and film	4,000
E33	Dance relating to environmental awareness	2,000



Where the funding goes: The Community and Belonging Forum (3)

Project	Description	Awarded to date (£)
Farm to City	Bringing farm life to central London – promoting awareness of food production, environmental management and wellbeing.	3,000
Outreach and Oral History Project	Community engagement lead by the Pan African Book Foundation	5,000
Neighbour Say My Name	People in communities coming together to form relationships	3,000
Alliance for Sustainable Households (ASH)	Support for refugees 'not in receipt of public support' and single parent households	5,000

Primary Prevention in Battersea

Member organisation case studies

The following slides explore three case studies of local residents who have benefited directly from access to Battersea Alliance member organisations. These case studies directly underscore the Alliance's relational approach and development of social capital resulting from this by highlighting how trust between organisations has led service users to be cross-referred.

These case studies reveal how access to these organisations have provided local opportunities which have improved residents' physical and mental wellbeing, and guided them towards positive activities which they otherwise may not have engaged with.

Through their engagement these case studies reveal the long-term impacts of funded community assets, such as securing qualifications or employment, which subsequently ease the burden on public services. Critically their engagement has also fostered a sense of community, place, and association with the Battersea area.



Battersea Alliance 2024 Festival
Photo credit: Sandra Munoz Alvarez



Carney's Community and Caius House case study

After being excluded from school and becoming involved in crime as a teenager, Andres* was referred to **Carney's Community** by the local Youth Offending Team. After struggling to find his way in life, this was the first time he had been offered an opportunity to take a more positive direction in life and avoid further involvement in crime:

“At that age...I wasn't introduced to anything like that.”

At Carney's, Andres took part in boxing and fitness classes as well as one-to-one sessions with key workers. With support from his key worker, he was awarded a grant to pursue a new hobby of t-shirt printing and has gone on to host workshops at various youth clubs to share this skill and discuss how Carney's has been the guiding pillar in his personal development. Andres described how this has provided him with greater self-confidence and social skills.

Subsequently, Andres began going along to **Caius House** after discovering it as another local opportunity. At Caius, he again transitioned from a participant to a leader, first as a volunteer and now through paid work to run workshops and mentor young people.

Prior to his involvement in Caius House and Carney's, Andres had little motivation to work or look after his health and rarely left the house. The joint work of these Battersea Alliance organisations has been vital in showing Andres how to care for himself by getting fit and finding work. Through this improved mindset, he has been able to study as an electrician in college and now holds a job in the trade.



Providence House and Katherine Low Settlement case study

Oscar first heard about **Providence House** when he was 10 years old, living on a local estate. Now 25, over the course of his adolescence, he's been involved with every Battersea Alliance member organisation. In his words,

“When you've been involved in these groups as a kid, it provides you with connections for when you grow up.”

Similarly, Bianca discovered Providence House as a young person looking for a place to go after school. She describes,

“Because you live in the area, eventually you hear about all these places.”

Both Oscar and Bianca later helped run the programmes they benefited from as children. Oscar has particularly fond memories of his subsequent participation with the **Katherine Low Settlement**, where he received sports coaching and later facilitated sports groups with younger people.

“It's a round circle- being involved enabled me to give back.”

Thinking about their participation across the years, Oscar feels local organisations have helped him mature and better prepare him for adult life. He also values the mental health benefits of having a positive place to pour his energy that wasn't through gangs or violence.

Bianca likewise believes local organisations were essential as *“somewhere to channel energy”* and not be *“distracted by negative influences”*.

Oscar feels certain his life would have taken a different path had it not been for the Battersea Alliance. He describes the sense of meaning and inspiration each organisation has given him, including strengthening his feeling of belonging in the local area. As he explains,

“It's nice to know you are trusted by others.”

The member organisations within the Alliance are inspiring a positive shift in the wider culture and society. As Bianca shares,

“The Battersea Alliance inspired me to put belief into people in the community.”



Katherine Low Settlement case study

Meredith had to complete mandatory volunteering in college and picked the **Katherine Low Settlement (KLS)** as her sponsor organisation because her sister was already connected to the organisation's Thursday youth club and kickboxing activities.

From her time volunteering, Meredith then decided to pursue an apprenticeship and qualification through KLS and began helping with after-school clubs and football. Meredith's involvement led then to her younger brother joining KLS programmes. Meredith describes the appeal of KLS in part due to their local reputation:

“They were close to home and I knew they had a big impact on the community.”

Through KLS, Meredith has now earned a Level 2 in Customer Service and a Level 3 in Business Administration. Already, she's thinking about a Level 4.

Meredith appreciates how her siblings were also able to receive support from KLS, particularly as they both have special needs. She explains,

“I've seen the effect of community on families.”

Meredith believes the single greatest benefit to come from her time with KLS has been a sense of personal confidence. She also sees this benefit reflected in other community participants.

“After a few weeks, they [the participants] are talking to everyone. I think everyone feels like a family. They feel trust and they can open up.”

Benefit does not stop at the doors of KLS; because of her involvement, Meredith has formed connections with her neighbours she never would have had otherwise.

“Sometimes when I'm walking down the street I recognise people I would never have spoken to without KLS.”

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Community and Wellbeing Forum case studies

Rocket Science spoke to service users of 6 of the 60 initiatives funded or supported through the Battersea Alliance. Through conversations and surveys, our fieldwork discovered a wealth of impact these organisations achieve. These include, but are not limited to, impacts on physical health, mental health, isolation, socio-emotional skills, and improved connection to their community and local services.

By applying the SROI methodology, we have illustrated the cost-savings these outcomes have for public services. These occur by reducing demand on existing services or benefits, or by creating long-term outcomes such as achieving employment.

In total, we estimate Battersea Alliance has generated an SROI of £428,159 just within this small sample of case studies.



Battersea Alliance 2024 Festival
Photo credit: Sandra Munoz Alvarez



Battersea Befrienders Network

Battersea Befriending Network (BBN) is a community friendship scheme. The programme matches community resident befrienders to befriendees with a history of mental health challenge. Although broadly supporting mental health and isolation, the programme is intergenerational and incredibly diverse with participants joining for a wide variety of motivations.

Once matched, each pair of new friends independently schedules regular chats and outings, over time by which they develop a trusted, lasting connection and source of mutual, one-to-one support.

BBN also organises wider social networking opportunities where participants and others interested in the programme can come to meet one another. These group meet-ups occur in places across the community including community centres, hospitals, coffee shops and arts centres.

We have developed three service user case studies for BBN and calculated the combined SROI to be £63,887.

Benefit (all three BBN case studies combined)	SROI
Improved mental and emotional wellbeing through social connection and reduced isolation	£24,184
Enhanced mental wellbeing, self-esteem and confidence	£12,563
Increased economic opportunities and mobility for marginalised individuals	£6,057
Reduced medical dependency	£5,835
Enhanced community integration and sense of belonging	£4,260
Increased confidence and self-esteem for participants	£2,483
Enhanced ability to access and utilise government services and benefits, leading to greater financial stability	£2,365
Improved physical health and fitness among participants	£2,220
Strengthened social connections, social capital and support networks	£1,830
Increased awareness of the importance of physical activity and self-care in mid and later life	£1,218
Increased trust and cooperation between multigenerational community members	£623
Improved coping skills and resilience	£249
Grand total	£63,887



Case study: Ananya at Battersea Befrienders Network

Ananya is a single mother who immigrated to the UK in the 80s. Having left behind her family and community, her relationship with her daughter became her **“whole world”**. When her daughter married and moved away, Ananya felt as though she lost her reason for existing.

To cope, Ananya began cooking and eating more than usual, leading to diabetes. Her doctor referred her into the BBN programme, though she was initially sceptical of how it would improve her physical health.

When Ananya was matched with a male befriender she was even more hesitant to join. However, she attended the first session and discovered her befriender, formerly a social worker, was **“the kindest, sweetest man”**. She has now had the same befriender, Carl, for 8 years. She describes him as **“like a brother”**.

Interactions with Carl help combat the severe depression that followed her daughter moving away. She now enjoys cooking for him, sharing meals and exploring places together. Ananya says, **“We talk about everything... I’m surviving because of this befriender.”**

Ananya feels more confident and supported following her befrienders influence over her diet and routines. Dressing up and going out to see her befriender has improved her self-esteem.

Her participation in the wider BBN network highlighted her struggles were not unique and that if others could manage their mental health, so could she. **“There are so many people living alone. Like me, crying, feeling there is nothing to look forward to.”**

BBN’s regularity gives her something to look forward to and reassures her of her own resilience. Pointing to her heart, she said, **“BBN is so beautiful; it’s my family”**.

Benefit	Five-year value
Reduced medical dependency	£5,835
Improved physical health and fitness	£3,438
Enhanced mental well-being	£12,563
Increased social connection and reduced isolation	£13,077
Grand total	£34,913



Case study: Anjum at Battersea Befrienders Network

Anjum did not know what to expect in joining BBN and assumed it would only be applicable for older people. She was surprised that her befriender was younger than her: a student who wanted to volunteer and explore London.

Anjum built trust with them and a lasting positive social connection. *"Our intellectual values are aligned. I was able to be open and share personal things... She knows me well and focuses on my strengths, supports my thinking, and sometimes challenges it."*

Anjum values their relationship as a space without judgment. *"They listen and accept when I am well and when I am low - there's no judgment. It's unconditional support."*

Anjum and her befriender share a love of exploring London and have invited each other to places and event., Anjum has noticed a shift in her confidence through these trips. *"I probably wouldn't have gone to half of the places I've been. I've built up my confidence which has translated to how I manage myself in the workplace. I don't feel trapped at home anymore."*

Anjum likes the wider social networking of BBN. *"I have gone to outings and met other people. It's a break from my norm."*

Whilst at BBN, Anjum lost her job and for a time struggled financially. While BBN outings are free, many befrienders and befriendedees meet up in a public space and share a meal, coffee or activity with a small cost. BBN covered the cost of coffee so she could continue to meet her befriender. *"They helped me because I had to scale back by costs. I didn't have to sacrifice my social life and by extension mental health because of finances."*

"BBN is an important, vital source of community."

Benefit	Five-year value
Strengthened connections and trust	£1,059
Increased confidence and self-esteem	£993
Increased economic opportunities	£6,057
Improved mental and emotional wellbeing	£2,428
Grand total	£10,537



Guy's Room

Guy's Room is a regular social meet-up of local men, many of whom have secondary-age children.

Early project participants were friends who had known each other for 30 years. Together, they recognised the changing problems of the area they lived in, particularly the growing impacts of gangs and physical violence on their kids' safety.

In weekly Monday gatherings, the men verbally process difficult topics such as the Covid-19 pandemic and topics across men's mental, physical and emotional health.

The group has also developed to serve a wider social purpose, connecting men into their surrounding community and forming a network of peer support.

We have developed two service user case studies from Guy's Room and calculated their combined SROI to be £15,264.

Benefit (two Guy's Room case studies combined)	Theme	Total impact
Improved mental and emotional wellbeing through social connection and reduced isolation	Health and wellbeing	£13,018
Strengthened social connections, social capital and support networks amongst participants	Social and community	£697
Empowerment of locals to address and resolve conflicts peacefully and without law enforcement	Social and community	£623
Increased confidence and self-esteem for participants	Health and wellbeing	£621
Enhanced cognitive skills such as problem solving and critical thinking	Educational	£305
Grand total		£15,264



Case study: Aaron at Guy's Room

Aaron was involved when Guys Room first started. He recalls the early project participants as a **"group of friends"** who recognised the impacts of gangs and physical violence were having on their kids. As Aaron explains, they wanted to talk about **"how to deter our kids from knife crime"**.

Through the project's regular Monday sessions, Aaron can **"put problems on the table"** and have **"positive discussions on bettering our community"**. He feels inspired that they **"can make a difference"** locally because **"you can't have a major impact without a collective coming together."**

Concerning crime and conflict, he describes the impact of the project as **making young people and their parents aware that "communication is key to success"**. When asked how his life would be different with Guys Room, Aaron explained, **"Without us getting together, our kids wouldn't have positive impacts."**

Aaron believes the **group discussions** that occur in Guys Room have **"broadened"** his thinking and that he has **"learned from the guys"** on an intellectual and emotional level.

He also says Guys Room improves his mental health. After Covid, he spiralled, feeling overwhelm and lacking an outlet to process his emotions. Guys Room was a beacon of hope during this time as the **"only place I could go for a constructive talk"**.

He explains how having space to dissect one's thoughts is vital, particularly for men who feel societal pressure to minimise their emotions and keep their insecurities private. **"It's nice that we get together and have a good talk. Sometimes we arrange trips to go out to uplift ourselves rather than than sitting down in our depression. It disarms us. One minute you're there and next at crisis."**

Benefit	Five-year value
Empowerment to address and resolve conflicts	£623
Enhanced problem solving skills	£305
Improved mental and emotional wellbeing through social connection and reduced isolation	£5,935
Grand total	£5,935



Case study: Bujar at Guy's Room

Bujar is a full-time carer which can be isolating. A friend invited him to join Guys Room and his motivation to participate centred on meeting other locals and forming deeper social connections. He has not previously been a part of something like Guys Room. *"I always saw local people and said hello but never got to know them properly. Guys Room was a chance to meet more local people."*

He has now been involved for a year and attends meet-ups twice a month. He finds that Guys Room, *"provides a space for more in-depth conversations that you can't normally have"*.

Bujar felt the isolation dealt by the Covid-19 pandemic meant he lost most of his social connections and interactions. Through Guys Room, Bujar has rebuilt his social life.

He particularly values the change he has seen from spending longer periods of time together: *"You get to know people properly"* and in doing so are, *"able to talk more about issues"*.

Since joining Guys Room, Bujar has been inspired by the impact he has witnessed in the lives of other members. He describes being able to *"contribute to the group"* and seeing others progress from attending as observers to *"become more confident"*, initiating discussion and sharing openly about their lives.

He says Guys Room has been *"extremely important"* to his health and wellbeing along with the way he fits within his wider community, allowing him to *"understand other people and their perspectives more"*. After sessions, Bujar leaves feeling *"uplifted"* and *"motivated"*.

Benefit	Five-year value
Strengthened social connections, social capital and support networks	£697
Increased confidence and self-esteem	£621
Improved mental and emotional wellbeing through social connection and reduced isolation	£8,011
Grand total	£9,329



Fitwell

Fitwell is a regular free women's fitness class that promotes physical and mental wellbeing through exercise, movement and social connection.

Fitwell is open to any woman though classes are predominantly attended by women of Muslim faith, who in a typical mixed-gender space might be discouraged to exercise given their religious dress.

Following fitness sessions, Fitwell coordinates mental health and wellbeing talks where women are invited to stay and chat, learn each other's stories, and be signposted to local resources and methods of support.

Using five service user survey responses from Fitwell we have calculated their combined SROI to be £78,708.

Benefit (combined across five survey participants)	Total impact
Improved mental and emotional wellbeing through social connection and reduced isolation	£22,760
Development of new skills and knowledge related to physical activity	£14,620
Enhanced mental wellbeing, self-esteem and body confidence	£14,016
Enhanced ability to access and utilise government services and benefits, leading to greater financial stability	£11,875
Reduced feelings of isolation, marginalization and exclusion	£5,788
Reduced medical dependency	£4,885
Improved interpersonal skills	£3,304
Strengthened social connections, social capital and support networks	£1,460
Grand total	£78,708



Case study: Valuing Fitwell

The following benefits reflect 5 surveyed participants of **Fitwell** who have been involved from as little as 9 months to as long as 6 years.

All respondents felt the project was important to their overall health and wellbeing and all felt improvement regarding their physical and mental health. Without Fitwell, one participant said their neck and shoulder pain would be worse, and another said she would stop exercising completely. Another shared she had been inactive following a c-section and COVID, but Fitwell provided her with the motivation to exercise again.

Further, 80% of those surveyed felt Fitwell had improved their self-confidence, sense of isolation and loneliness.

Participants enjoy the opportunity to **"keep fit"** and value not needing to travel far from their homes. Most participants also articulated the benefits of a woman-only **"safe space"**. One participant described the value of **"laughing together"** leading to then **"chatting over our mental health"**.

Beyond bonding through physical activity, participants are given space to connect and learn about local resources following a session through informative wellbeing talks and signposting. One participant said **"the talks after the class are useful and relevant"**. Another said they **"find it useful to hear different people's experience"** and while one other individual shared these talks help her **"tremendously"**.

Regular meet ups left 80% of respondents surveyed feeling their interpersonal skills had improved, while all respondents said they felt a stronger sense of community. One participant explains how her sense of belonging would be lost without Fitwell:

"There are no places that are affordable to exercise with women only. No sense of community. No sense of belonging. No community support."



SW Lions

SW Lions is an after-school football club for local young men to play sport and exercise while meeting other young men and forming positive social connections.

The club has a wider mission to decrease criminal activity by redirecting those at risk of gang involvement and violence to healthy friendships.

Using five service user survey responses from SW Lions we have calculated their combined SROI to be £54,060.

Benefit (combined across five survey participants)	Theme	Total impact
Improved mental and emotional wellbeing through social connection and reduced isolation	Health and wellbeing	£33,995
Enhanced mental wellbeing, self-esteem and body confidence	Health and wellbeing	£11,565
Decreased rates of crime and AB in targeted estate areas	Social and community	£5,015
Strengthened social connections, social capital and support networks amongst participants	Social and community	£3,485
Grand total		£54,060



Case study: Change through SW Lions

The following benefits reflect 5 surveyed participants of **SW Lions**. Participants had been involved for between 2 and 5 years and all attended the initiative twice a week. All five individuals recommended the project.

SW Lions does not just give young people a place to go play sport: it is a positive community of peer role models with real impact around decreasing criminal activity. Without SW Lions, one participant reflected they would likely *"be in prison or in a gang"*.

The social and community benefits around SW Lion were highlighted by all participants. 100% of those surveyed felt a greater sense of belonging in the community because of their involvement. One said, without the initiative, they would be *"at home on the computer. Not going to clubs and not meeting new people"*. Similarly, another shared that without SW Lions they would *"struggle to socialise"*.

The mental health support provided by SW Lions is apparent: 100% of surveyed participants felt 'much better' about their mental wellbeing because of involvement in SW Lions. Similarly, 100% said their stress had decreased since joining.

One participant shares, *"In Covid I felt very isolated. SW Lions has been good physically and mentally for me."*

Another participant explains, *"I was struggling mentally before SW Lions. I see the whole team as a family, we look after each other."*

SW Lions also boosts participants' self-esteem. 100% of those surveyed felt their confidence had significantly improved since joining the club.



Disco Dance

Disco Dance is a free dance class for local women, predominately attended by those aged 55+.

The project aims to improve participants' physical health, isolation and loneliness by offering a no-judgment space for intergenerational connection and joy.

Using 11 service user survey responses of Disco Dance we have calculated their combined SROI to be £122,572.

Benefit (combined across eleven survey participants)	Total impact
Enhanced mental wellbeing, self-esteem and body confidence	£47,313
Improved mental and emotional wellbeing through social connection and reduced isolation	£27,306
Reduced feelings of isolation, marginalization and exclusion	£22,143
Development of new skills and knowledge related to physical activity	£11,007
Increased economic opportunities and mobility for marginalised individuals	£9,087
Strengthened social connections, social capital and support networks	£3,762
Reduced medical dependency	£1,954
Grand total	£122,572



Case study: Impacts across Disco Dance

The following benefits reflect 11 surveyed participants of **Disco Dance**. All survey respondents had been involved for between 1 and 2 years and most had attended around 15 sessions. All would recommend the class.

Disco Dance supports improvements in health. 82% of those surveyed felt 'much better' about their physical, mental and emotional health. 91% of respondents surveyed felt their stress had decreased. One respondent shared that *"I love dancing, it is one of my main sources of exercise and enjoyment"* while another said she *"dances to de-stress"*.

According to respondents, dancing inspires feelings of liberation and empowerment, creating a space where participants can relax and experience joy. Classes are a *"positive space for women of a certain age to act out their youth again and feel a sense of freedom, support without judgment"*. Participants described Disco Dance as a *"kind"* community. All eleven respondents surveyed felt a greater sense of belonging in the community since attending classes.

Disco Dance also provides social, relational support. 55% of respondents said they would be lonelier without Disco Dance.

The project is a welcoming place to form new connections or sustain existing ones. One respondent said: *"It's a great place to take friends and family for a night out. I have met new people and made new contacts and deep friendships"*. Another respondent shared the experience is *"Super friendly and joyous. Wonderfully facilitated and it always feels so welcome...It is a great mix of people and age."*

Several respondents experienced economic and employment benefits through Disco Dance. One shared: *"I have been able to spread the word about my memoir and several people have purchased a copy...Also becoming a Board member and teaching dance steps has added a new dimension to my CV."* Another described encountering *"job opportunities and ideas"* and another expressed connections made through Disco Dance have been, *"helpful to my business."*



AGOE Empowerment Network

The **AGOE Empowerment Network** is a sub-group of Support4Support, focused predominately on the unique needs of Black and global majority ethnic mothers.

AGOE assists community members in applying for benefits and receiving English language training in addition to signposting them to other paths of local support.

Using five service user survey responses from AGOE we have calculated their combined SROI to be £122,572.

Benefit (combined across five survey participants)	Total impact
Improved mental and emotional wellbeing through social connection and reduced isolation	£14,566
Improved financial literacy, including understanding and navigating council payments	£13,060
Strengthened social connections, social capital and support networks amongst participants	£1,605
Increased confidence and self-esteem for participants	£1,372
Enhanced English language skills	£1,312
Opportunities for residents to share skills, knowledge and interests, promoting personal growth and life satisfaction	£918
Grand total	£32,833



Case study: Support through AGOE Empowerment Network

The following insights reflect 5 surveyed participants of the **AGOE Empowerment Network**.

AGOE provides a community forum for its members. All surveyed participants felt a greater sense of belonging in their community since joining the network. One participant, a single parent, described how community is **"lacking in London"** but through AGOE they and their child have met **"inspirational"** individuals.

Another respondent was an AGOE beneficiary before volunteering with the organisation. **"As a result of the impact I received, I decided to volunteer to also empower others. I am so glad I am doing something valuable in my community."** Others expressed similar appreciation, including how much they valued **"sharing and helping in the community"**.

Knowledge sharing is a key function of the group. AGOE provides workshops and seminars, some designed specifically for certain groups (such as women and single parents). Participants described the **"informative"** nature of the network and one received a certificate to support vulnerable people through the group.

Multiple respondents were signposted or referred onwards to further local mechanisms of support, including to counselling, Wandsworth Housing services and Wandsworth Health and Social Care services.

Respondents also described receiving assistance such as **"filling out forms and finding info"**, and value the **"advice and support"** available.

One key aim of the network is to improve the financial resilience of its members. Several participants have received vouchers through their involvement. One respondent explained the value of simply knowing there is financial advice and support available, saying, **"It helped me financially just knowing this extra support is here."**

Respondents felt their wellbeing suffer without the network. One shared, **"I feel I my health and mental state would deteriorate."** Another shared that without AGOE, **"I would have lots of anxiety."**



Supporting relational approaches

Battersea Alliance also supports local organisations who are taking relational and community-based approaches to tackling specific issues, as evidenced by their support of Riverside Radio and Roots to Change CIC.

Riverside Radio is a community radio station founded in 2014 by local resident Jason Rosam who had left the Wandsworth area to pursue a successful broadcasting career. Upon returning, he wanted to give back. The station provides a voice for the local community, inviting residents of all ages to share their stories, develop their skills and be a part of something bigger.

Back in 2014, Jason initially had no idea if there would be local interest in radio. He decided to advertise for a meet-up in a Council magazine. To his amazement, 60 people turned up, all enthusiastic.

Since its humble beginnings, the project has grown to accommodate hundreds of volunteers, running several strands of work including an after-school club for young people that provides qualifications in subjects such as radio broadcasting, production, editing, and journalism.

The station broadcasts a range of content, including local news, interviews, and music. Riverside Radio celebrates the richness and diversity of the Battersea area.

Today, Jason has witnessed a transformation in the civic pride of the area. The radio provides locals with a sense of consistency and reliable exposure to news, politics, and the stories of those living alongside them.

In Jason's eyes, the project succeeds because it approaches Battersea's challenges with a strong belief in people and community. In his words, Riverside Radio, *"keeps relationships alive"*.

Roots to Change CIC was created out of a similar ethos by Polly Newall, a Southwark resident and local primary school teacher.

Polly founded Roots to Change with the goal of taking action against gender-based violence through primary prevention work with potential and former perpetrators of violence in the area. The organisation now raises awareness around violence in local communities and facilitates workshops and events.



Conclusions and calls to action



Supporting relational approaches to social impact

The Battersea Alliance funds a range of hyper-local, preventative projects, each delivering strong positive outcomes for service users.

Funding local grassroots projects enables the unique challenges of a locality to be addressed at their roots. By investing in targeted interventions run by leaders embedded with local expertise, these projects can reduce inequalities and bridge gaps in services.

The projects funded by the Alliance often have a core focus such as education, mental health, fitness or community cohesion, which have ripple effects in preventing a range of interconnected issues, from crime and substance abuse to ill health and social isolation. Ultimately, supporting these projects empowers individual outcomes, but also contributes to a more supported and prosperous society.

A highly relational and person-orientated approach is integral to the design of all the funded projects and the related impacts witnessed.

Projects unanimously described the value of a relational approach: both in their interactions with service users, and their method of working in partnership and collaboration with other support providers in borough.

The Battersea Alliance champions such a way of working, reducing competition and duplication across services and instead assembling a strong, supportive network of professionals. These leaders signpost their users to one another, creating an ecosystem of care. In this way, a relational approach strengthens the resilience of organisations, their leadership and the people they support.



Patterns of SROI benefits

The most common benefits across projects were around **health and well-being**, particularly improved mental health. The most frequently mentioned benefits in the case studies were:

- Improved mental and emotional well-being through social connection and reduced isolation (6 of 7 cases);
- Enhanced mental wellbeing, self-esteem and body confidence (4 of 7);
- Increased confidence and self-esteem for participants (4 of 7).

Social and community benefits were also often mentioned, although the social value attributed to these was much lower (partly as a result of the reliable proxies available for these benefits). One particularly frequently referenced benefit was:

- *Strengthened social connections, social capital and support networks amongst participants (6 of 7).*

Two other benefits were referenced by 3 out of 7 case studies:

- *Reduced medical dependency;*
- *Increased economic opportunities and mobility for marginalised individuals.*

Theme of benefits	Benefits (n) across all case studies	Total impact
Health and wellbeing	23	£272,967
Social and community	13	£36,004
Education	7	£44,566
Employment and economic	5	£74,622
Grand Total	48	£428,159



Calls to action

With these findings in mind, we are making the following three calls to action:

1

Invest in the Battersea Alliance's Community Investment Fund in order to continue and expand its relational approach to supporting the wealth and health of local residents and organisations;

2

Partner through a pilot which brings together public services and the Battersea Alliance's 'community prescribing' approach, so more residents benefit from community and voluntary services available to them;

3

Collaborate on the co-production of participatory research to better evidence and share knowledge on the impact and effectiveness of a localised community prescribing model.



Priority 1: Invest

1

Invest in the Battersea Alliance's Community Investment Fund in order to continue and expand its relational approach to supporting the wealth and health of local residents and organisations.

Issue

This report has demonstrated and underlined the value of the Battersea Alliance's relational approach to investment and service development in the local area. However, with Big Local funding coming to an end further investment is required to continue and develop the services already supported through the Alliance, as well as fund others.

The Battersea Alliance is launching the Community Investment Fund as a means for this. This Fund will ensure residents have access to services meeting their needs locally.

Actions for the Council, ICB, and other investors

- Commit funding to the Community Investment Fund



Priority 2: Partner

2

Partner through a pilot which brings together public services and the Battersea Alliance's 'community prescribing' approach, so more residents benefit from community and voluntary services available to them.

Issue

Public services are currently under strain and not meeting the needs of local people. This work has shown the Battersea Alliance's approach of 'social prescribing' can be an affordable and effective means to support the health and wellbeing of local people.

Actions for the Council and ICB:

- Commit to working with the Battersea Alliance to co-develop and finalise a test and learn 'Community Prescribing' pilot which involves referring residents to community services before they have accessed a General Practice, thereby simultaneously increasing access to support and reducing the burden on public services.



Priority 3: Collaborate

3

Collaborate on the co-production of participatory research to better evidence and share knowledge on the impact and effectiveness of a localised community prescribing model.

Issue

While this report has evidenced the impact of the Battersea Alliance's work, more is to be done to identify the wider impacts of its work.

Actions for Council and ICB:

- Commit funding to a participatory research methodology to evidence the value and impact of a 'community prescribing' approach that brings together public and community services.

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