

My Lewisham

MY ENDS

DYNAMIC PROCESS EVALUATION

CONSORTIUM REPORT



VRU

MAYOR OF LONDON
VIOLENCE REDUCTION UNIT

 **Innovation
Unit**

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Introduction

MyEnds is London VRU's flagship programme – it promotes a hyper-local, community-led approach to tackling violence that puts young people and communities at the centre of decision making. The programme supports Consortiums of community and statutory partners in nine London boroughs.

My Lewisham is one of nine My Ends Consortiums, based in the borough of Lewisham. My Lewisham is adopting a unique approach to supporting young people at risk or being affected by violence by centring therapeutic approaches and contextual safeguarding. My Lewisham's target areas for delivering interventions are focused in the North of the borough. These include: Pepys Estate (within the Evelyn Ward), Honor Oak Estate (within the Telegraph Hill Ward), and the Monson and Hatcham areas of New Cross (from Kender Street in the West).

My Lewisham Delivery Partners

Power The Fight (Lead)			
A charity which tackles violence affecting young people. They create long-term solutions for sustainable change and act as a link between the community and policymakers.			
Spark 2 Life A charity that supports children, young adults and those who face adversity to make positive, productive life choices.	Partisan A Black-led Community Interest Company, born out of a pull from the community for accessible and culturally sensitive mental health and wellbeing support.	XLP A youth work charity walking alongside young people across nine London boroughs, helping them build the confidence, skills and opportunities they need to shape their own futures.	Professor Carlene Firmin An applied social researcher, concerned with safeguarding young people, social justice and inequality, working to embed a contextual approach to safeguarding young people

About this report

This Consortium Report is part of an independent ‘**dynamic process evaluation**’ (DPE) programme undertaken by Innovation Unit¹ across the 2024-2026 delivery period. This Consortium Report shares insights and learning points captured across the two years in relation to My Lewisham’s work, spotlighting activity and approaches that appear most effective in enabling local systems to change.

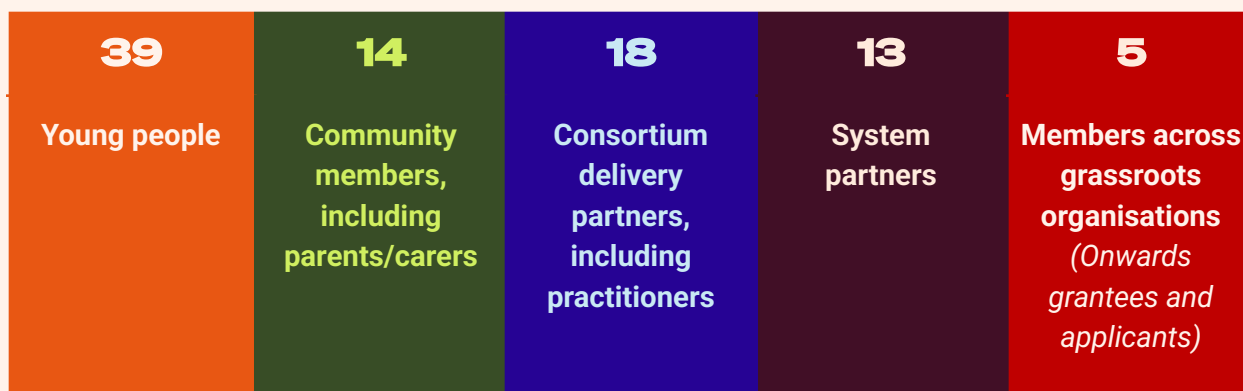
‘What’s strong, not what’s wrong’

The DPE sought to gather insights and learning across three distinct levels of the MyEnds Programme – programme, site and intervention. A series of high-level research questions provided a framework for discovery and generated lines of enquiry for the evaluation of the MyEnds programme delivery model and MyEnds Consortiums’ activities and interventions.

The approach taken was to carry out an evaluation grounded in strong community voice, using an Appreciative Inquiry methodology, looking for ‘**what’s strong, not what’s wrong**’. An important element of the methodology was adapting to emerging, or changing, needs of Sites. Differences between Sites were recognised and reflected in a responsive stance to the evaluation activity.

Who was involved in the evaluation?

Through surveys, workshops, interviews and events, the evaluation gathered insights² from:



The evaluation also analysed My Lewisham’s Quarterly Monitoring Reports, gathered stories of change via Most Significant Change Workshops, and generated case studies to spotlight promising practice.

¹ In year 1, Innovation Unit worked in partnership with ResPeo to deliver the Dynamic Process Evaluation.

² These stakeholder numbers are based on number of people who took part in the Evaluation activities, and may not be unique stakeholders

Background

At the beginning of the MyEnds programme, My Lewisham took part in Community Needs Assessment, which considered how local assets, good practices, and gaps in service provision can be leveraged to maximise the effectiveness of their interventions supporting young people at risk of or being affected by violence.

This process identified the following gaps in local provision:

- Provision for parents (e.g. therapy, information sessions, forums)
- Youth provision (hyperlocal support for 11-25 year olds, employment and skills support for 16-24 year olds, safe spaces, opportunities for young people to get involved in music)
- Services supporting women and girls who have experienced gender based violence
- Initiatives that bring people together in the community
- Communities and VCS organisations providing support to carers and parents in navigating school exclusion

The following key takeaways were identified:

- **Build relationships with local businesses**, such as barber shops, construction companies, and coffee shops, that can offer vocational training opportunities for young people.
- **Further develop relationships with faith groups, especially Mosques.** Idea: there is potential to develop training programmes for faith groups that might initially be apprehensive about working with young people perceived to be 'high-risk'. The GLA's Multi-Faith Network might be able to support this.
- **Build a stronger relationship with the local Safer Neighbourhood Board** as a route to being more connected with **Lewisham's MPS:** an essential stakeholder to the success of the Consortium's detached work.
- **Upskill community groups, faith groups, and grassroots organisations** to effectively engage with young people referred to them. Idea: Grassroots organisations or communities that have received grants through the Consortium's grantmaking programme could receive training on best practices for working with young people.
- **Create more accessible spaces where young people can simply be themselves**
- **Build relationships between incoming and existing communities to foster a mutual understanding and change narratives about local young people.**

In order to address these gaps and support young people at risk or being affected by violence, My Lewisham developed a programme that included culturally sensitive therapeutic support,

accessible mental health and wellbeing support, educational mentoring, employability and arts-based interventions.

My Lewisham identified established relationships to maintain to support the delivery of MyEnds, including the 2000 Community Action Community Centre, which was identified as a key partner to engage new young people in the area. Lewisham Council teams and multi-agency partnerships, such as Youth Justice, Community Safety, the Lewisham Safeguarding Partnership, and Violence Reduction Team, were also identified as existing important partners for the Consortium. The Consortium is keen to develop stronger relationships with: local businesses to develop employment and training opportunities for young people; influential and trusted faith groups for outreach purposes; and Lewisham MPS.

My Lewisham Theory of Change

Drawing on the findings of the CNA, My Lewisham developed the following Theory of Change to guide their hyper-local work and understand how they aim to make a long-term impact.

Long-term VRU Outcomes

- 1 Community-focused, partnership approach to long-term violence solutions
- 2 Children and young people feel safer
- 3 Violence is stabilised and reduced

Long-term MyEnds Outcomes

- 1 Creating the conditions for local approaches to stabilising and reducing violence
- 2 Increased long term capacity across the local system to deliver these approaches
- 3 More inclusive decision making in local systems
- 4 Stronger and more consistent trust and collaboration between local community and agencies
- 5 A reduction in violence in areas affected by high and sustained levels of violence

What does the community need?	What will we do? (Activity themes)	Short and medium term outcomes	Long-term MyEnds outcomes	Long-term VRU outcomes
School-based interventions are needed, as educational attainment is below average in Lewisham and exclusions are high.	Education: School-based mentoring & group work for at-risk pupils	Increased educational engagement for children & young people	1,4	All
Poor integration of services is limiting young people's access to safe spaces and trusted adults, and there is a shortage of targeted support for women and girls affected by gender-based violence.	Extra-curricular: Mobile youth club & girls drama group	More positive opportunities for children & young people, including improved self-esteem, self-confidence, and socio-emotional learning skills	1,4	
Disconnect in Lewisham's voluntary sector is restricting young people's access to services. Detached youth work will ensure early identification of at-risk youth and timely referral to mentoring (below) for ongoing holistic support.	Community work: Detached youth work to ensure that at-risk youth are identified and supported	Communities are less worried about violence.	1,4	
There is a lack of safe spaces for young people to talk to trusted adults in North Lewisham.	Specialist Mentoring: Tailored & holistic support including advocacy, wellbeing, employment/education, and onward signposting	Young people have a trusted adult in their lives and are less likely to resort to violence .	1,4,5	
There is a need to fund, support & upskill grassroots groups, non-youth-focussed Voluntary & Community Sector organisations & trusted faith leaders, who often lack the resources and training to support high-risk	Grassroots community building: Fund, support & upskill local organisations and trusted faith leaders, via Onwards	Communities are empowered , and there is increased capacity in community networks.	1,2,3,4	

<p>youth.</p> <p>Gaps in service provision are widest in areas where partners have less established relationships and are not deeply embedded in the local community. To enhance reach and strengthen local presence, the Consortium will build and strengthen ties with key statutory partners, local businesses (to create training/employment opportunities for young people) and trusted faith groups.</p>	<p>Grants & tailored training</p> <p>Stronger networks and partnerships:</p> <p>Strengthen ties with statutory partners, local businesses and trusted faith groups</p>			
<p>Young people need opportunities to develop social & employability skills, and to shape local service design. There is also a need to foster connections between incoming and existing Lewisham residents amid gentrification-related tensions.</p>	<p>Youth and community participation:</p> <p>Participatory Grant Making Programme including youth-led projects & skills-building workshops</p>	<p>Young people are more engaged in service design & delivery and have greater self-esteem & self-confidence. In addition, communities & marginalised groups are empowered.</p>	<p>1,2,3,4</p>	

Interventions

The MyEnds programme model endorses hyper-local and preventative approaches to targeting the root causes of violence, delivering key activity strands across three tiers:

- **Primary interventions:** Activities designed for children and young people with no or little risk of exposure to or involvement in violence, focuses on preventing violence before it happens.
- **Secondary interventions:** Activities aimed at children and young people at risk of being affected by violence, focusing on protection and immediate responses to prevent escalation.
- **Tertiary interventions:** Activities designed for those already affected by violence, focuses on long-term care and rehabilitation, in order to interrupt and reduce the impact of violence on individuals and communities.

My Lewisham have delivered 7 interventions since April 2024:

Intervention name	Description	Type of intervention
Participatory Grant Making Project (PGM)	A project co-developed with young people will utilise grant funds to support small youth-led projects. This peer-to-peer approach will help young people develop essential employability and social skills in project management, budgeting, and application writing. A core panel of six young people will guide the project, while additional capacity-building activities and workshops will be available to a larger group.	Primary
Detached Youth Work	Weekly detached youth work sessions focusing on engaging those on the margins of support. Youth workers will collaborate with local businesses and community members to enhance guardianship and provide a referral route to Spark2Life's mentoring service.	Tertiary
Holistic Mentoring	Tertiary mentoring service for young people above the age of 24, across three neighbourhoods. Youth are paired with trained case workers for up to 12 months of weekly 1-hour face-to-face sessions. These person-centred, trauma-informed sessions focus on relationships, family, friends, and purpose, allowing for a client-led approach.	Tertiary
Bus Project	Mobile youth club on the Pepys estate, open on Friday evenings during term time for 30 young people, providing a safe space for socialising and activities such as cooking and debating. They will also offer residential and trips during school holidays. This is crucial while the local youth club is being refurbished.	Secondary
Girls Drama Group	A drama club led by a Drama Therapist and a youth worker, focusing on building confidence and	Secondary

	resilience in young people through creative drama activities. This initiative aims to provide much-needed gender-specific support for girls and young women in the borough.	
School-Based Mentoring	One-to-one and group mentoring support at a secondary school serving the Monson/Hatcham and Turnham areas, targeting children who are struggling with learning, behaviour, bullying, or at risk of exclusion.	Secondary
Contextual Safeguarding Project	Professor Carlene Firmin will collaborate with the Consortium and the local authority to integrate contextual safeguarding into the project and support the local safeguarding team.	Primary

Emerging outcomes³

Delivery partners consistently collect insights from participants relating to the short and medium-term outcomes outlined in the My Lewisham Theory of Change. Where intervention outcomes data were collected, My Lewisham reported high improvement rates against their targets, with several key outcomes emerging, including:

- **Increased educational engagement:** XLP gathers data from teachers and mentors of young people who are involved in the School-based mentoring programme. Of the 24 participants they collected outcomes data from (out of a possible 32), 100% showed increased educational engagement.
- **Increased social and emotional skills, confidence and self-esteem:** My Lewisham partners deliver a range of interventions focusing on young people’s emotional and social wellbeing, which are showing promising outcomes so far:
 - 22 out of 36 participants of the Girls Drama Group programme responded to their feedback survey. Of these, 91% reported **improved social and emotional skills**, and 73% **reported an increase in confidence and self-esteem**.
 - Similarly, among the 20 participants in the **Open Access Bus Project** with outcomes data, 90% demonstrated **improved social and emotional skills**, and **85% demonstrated increase in confidence and self-esteem** (gathered through adult rating termly caseload evaluation).

³ Outcome data is collected and self-reported by My Lewisham Delivery Partners. Tools include feedback surveys, attendance data and caseload evaluation .

Reach⁴

When My Lewisham set out their delivery plan, they said they wanted to reach around **230 local people in year 1**.

By the end of year 1, My Lewisham had reached almost 700 people. As of September 2025, they reached around **1080 people, including over 1060 children and young people**, greatly exceeding their intended reach targets in year 1, and showing continued growth in year 2.

The table below breaks down My Lewisham’s reach by group. While My Lewisham reports strong reach for children and young people, they have not reported reaching other groups, such as parents and carers, over-25s or teachers. This may be due to a number of reasons, including underreporting of reach data or a lack of mechanisms to gather participation from wider stakeholders. Nonetheless, it may be helpful for My Lewisham to consider how they can reach broader stakeholders through targeted work and to set up mechanisms to record progress in this area. In particular, it is also noted that parents and carers were a key priority identified in the community needs assessment, and this may be a group to consider how to strategically increase engagement with, given the ‘whole family’ approach that underpins the MyEnds model.

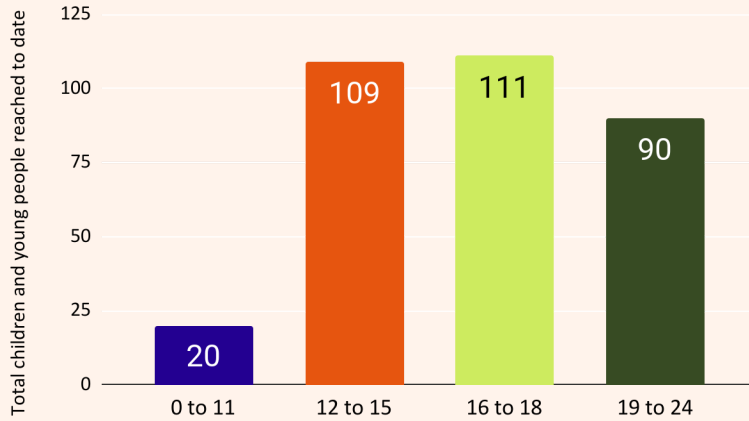
Type of user	Actual
CYP	1063
Youth Practitioners	6
Other Professionals	5

Age groups

Where data were available, the majority of young people engaged with My Lewisham were aged between 16 and 18 (34%, n=111/330) and 12 and 15 (33%, n=109/330). 19 to 24 year olds made up 28% (n=90/330), suggesting an even split of young people reached among these three groups, while 0 to 11 year olds were the smallest group (6%, n=20/330).

⁴ Reach data are based on self-reported engagement data per interventions reported in quarterly monitoring reports April 2024-September 2025. It is noted that some people may be engaged in more than one intervention, and so these numbers may not be based on unique individuals. Gender and ethnicity data were not always recorded, therefore these statistics are calculated from the available subset.

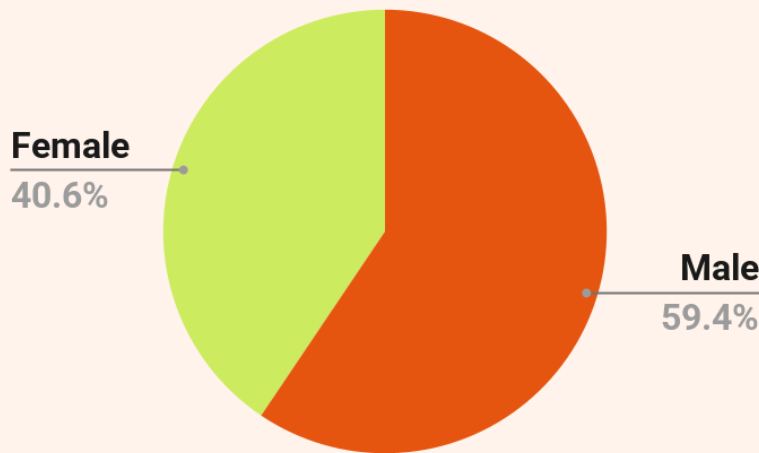
Children and young people reached by age group



Gender

Among the children and young people involved in My Lewisham, the majority were male (59%, n=104/175), and 41% were female (n=71/175). While there is still some progress to be made, My Lewisham are reporting reaching a larger proportion of young women and girls than the MyEnds programme average.

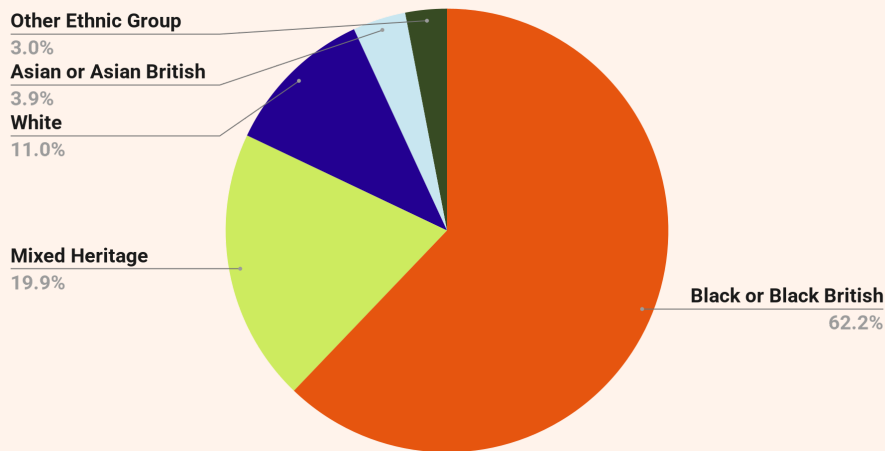
Children and young people reached by gender



Ethnicity

The largest ethnic group represented in My Lewisham’s activities were Black or Black British (62%, n=225/362). 20% of young people were of Mixed Heritage (n=72/362), and 11% were white (n=40/362).

Children and young people reached by ethnicity



Special Cohorts

My Lewisham have also reported reaching:

- 23 young people at risk of exclusion from education
- 12 young people Not in Employment, Education or Training
- 11 young people previously involved in the Criminal Justice System
- 10 young people who have experienced mental health issues

Insights from practice

Below, we highlight key findings from My Lewisham's work, including emerging insights, learnings, promising practices and stories of impact. While not an exhaustive account, it offers a window into the mechanisms underpinning the Consortium's approach and the impact it has delivered.

Youth and Community Participation

Through workshops, interviews and surveys with young people, community members, and Consortium Partners, we explored the approaches MyEnds Consortiums are taking to embed youth and community participation into their work, as well as the perceived impact of this on equity, trust and buy-in to local approaches.

Insights gathered indicate that My Lewisham is working to embed youth and community voice into their delivery, with most survey respondents saying that the Consortium is doing a good job working with them. However, more could be done to build a regular rhythm of feedback:

- 70% of young people and community members said that My Lewisham is 'definitely' or 'mostly' doing a good job of working with them and reducing community violence (n=33/47).
- 66% of young people and community members said that My Lewisham is involving 'some' or a 'large range' of community members in its work (n=31/47)
- 60% of youth and community members said that My Lewisham asks for their feedback 'very often' or 'sometimes' (n=28/47),
- 53% of respondents said that they have seen My Lewisham use the feedback to make changes (n=25/47).

Involving young people in decision-making

We heard that My Lewisham places significant emphasis on youth participation, aiming to involve them in decision-making from the outset and keep them engaged every step of the way. We heard in youth workshops how staff intentionally create a comfortable environment where young people feel a high level of respect, allowing them to voice thoughts and feelings without judgment.

Partisan's Participatory Grant-Making Project is a key example of placing young people at the heart of decision-making, as they gained access to funds and support to work on projects of their choice. Young people participated in project meetings and engaged in conversations with staff to adapt projects and bring their ideas to life, all to benefit their local community. Sessions are structured to ensure high participation, with one participant noting that in a group of 25-30 people, **"everyone had their moment to express themselves."** To reduce barriers to participation

and improve accessibility, the Consortium adapted its application method to include voice/video submissions for young people, suggesting continued efforts to involve them.

Story of impact

From Consultation to Co-Production: Young People in Lewisham Take the Lead

In Lewisham, young people had grown weary of empty promises. They were continually consulted but rarely heard – watching local services close while their ideas gathered dust. Those aged 18–25 felt particularly invisible, having ‘aged out’ of traditional services. System promises lacked credibility.

The Consortium recognised that change required a shift from consultation to co-production. After building trust with a small group, they co-designed a “Youth Impact Weekender” – a two-day event led by Partisan designed to mobilise young people to shape solutions for a safer Lewisham while building leadership and teamwork skills.

Over 100 young people expressed interest! 46 applied and 24 attended, each receiving £200 for their time and insight. Together, they generated seven project ideas with an intersectional lens, centring on a range of key issues, including the needs and experiences of local young women.

The Consortium also put their money where their mouth was – ring-fencing funds and holding fortnightly co-production sessions to help young people to bring their ideas to life.

Trust didn’t return overnight. But through consistent presence and follow-through, the Consortium earned credibility. Young people saw their ideas move from concept to action and, as a result, they felt *seen* and gained agency. As a few “Weekenders” reflected:

“I felt like my voice – and speaking out for other young people like myself – counted.”

“It has inspired me to create positive change as I’ve heard so many stories that resonate with me, so it shows I’m not alone, and something can be done.”

What began as a project has grown into a local movement – with Weekenders delivering the projects they designed, motivating peers to get involved, and stepping up as ambassadors for change.

We also heard from community members in the workshop about how they have been involved with the Consortium for years, working to tackle local issues and coordinate responses. Community members shared that they actively network with partners, including the local council and police, to tackle immediate concerns head-on through joint problem-solving meetings. While this was from a small sample of community members, this indicates that My Lewisham is working to embed community leadership in their work.

While My Lewisham delivers a range of activities to embed youth and community participation, the survey results indicate that there is still some way to go to ensure that there is a regular rhythm of feedback built with communities and young people. One community member shared through the survey that more work needs to be done to ensure that community engagement is meaningful:

“The delivery and components of [the community engagement] model need to be reviewed to prevent it being seen and felt as a tick box exercise”

– Community Member

Community members also shared in workshops that communication with system partners, such as the Police and Local Council, could be better, to ensure joined-up working in the area.

5/5

Average rating from Consortium Members on how their engagement has increased trust in and buy-in to local approaches.

In workshops, community members shared that trust was established early because the decision-making model centred on the agency of local people, which resonated with the community's view that people are an asset. My Lewisham's Quarterly Monitoring Data also highlighted efforts to gain the trust of community members through focusing on quick, visible responses following incidents and hosting events that bring people together, such as a community fun day at Pepys estate.

An analysis of contextual approaches in My Lewisham by Professor Carlene Firmin revealed how partners built trust with young people by working with familiar adults (youth workers) and connecting them with local business owners (gyms, cafes) to create a wider safety net. Another key factor for building trust with young people was partner organisations responding to young people's requests and advocating for their access to services they needed.

Delivering locally-informed interventions

From the insights gathered and the data reported by My Lewisham, it appears that the interventions are making a difference locally, with young people and service users reporting positive effects of being involved. According to Consortium members, the most successful activities in supporting young people include: holistic one-to-one support, creative and sports-based interventions, and school- and education-based interventions.

35/47

Community and youth survey respondents felt that MyEnds is bringing “a few” or “lots” of changes to their local area

“The wider range of activities offered (arts based, school based, open access, intensive) have ensured that children and young people from a wide range of backgrounds and with varying needs/vulnerabilities have been supported”

– Consortium member

When asked what My Lewisham is doing well, key themes from community and young people’s survey included:

- Helping young people develop new skills, grow confidence and build motivation
- Creating safe spaces for young people and communities to get support
- Providing structured and fun activities for young people

“Providing young people with safe and secure spaces to express themselves (away from more adult-like physical and online spaces where they could be badly influenced or learn behaviours that are not beneficial or too mature for them).”

– Young person, survey

“One good thing about MyEnds is that it has young people’s intentions in mind to the fullest and will do anything to help them with motivation them and increasing they confidence with helping areas and giving them local spaces with fellow peers.”

– Young person, survey

“The consistency and getting me into education”

– Young person, survey

Young people and community members also shared ideas for ways to improve these, including:

- More events and activities with the community
- Opportunities for aspiring entrepreneurs (particularly at Riverside Youth Club)
- Better advertising (particularly in the Besson Street Newsletter)

"Get out there and let people know you are here."

– Community member, survey

Reaching those most in need of support

Consortium members rated their success in identifying and reaching those most in need (including marginalised groups) at 4 out of 5.

Three tertiary service users participated in practitioner-led interviews. From the insights gathered, it appears that the support, which consisted of mentoring and therapeutic casework, was highly valued, with all three tertiary service users saying they would recommend the support they received. Tertiary service users shared that through the support, they have had a shift toward greater motivation to seek employment, greater focus on their future, and greater confidence and a willingness to want better for themselves. The support was most helpful when it involved signposting to local services and providing mentoring, which gave young people an opportunity to feel listened to and believed in.

3/3

Tertiary service users said they would recommend the support they received

Spotlight on promising practice

Detached Youth Work and Holistic Mentoring, Spark2Life

Tier	Tertiary
Target group	Young people in Lewisham who are on the edge of services or support, and most likely to be affected by violence and exploitation.
Setting	Community-based outreach within three hyper-local areas in Lewisham and Spark2Life's offices for mentoring.
Format	Street-based detached outreach and youth engagement, and 1:1 mentoring.
Duration	Ongoing weekly sessions, with mentoring taking place for 12 months
Sessions delivered	470 detached sessions and 302 mentoring sessions
Participants reached	876 Children and Young People through detached outreach, and 18 Children and Young People through mentoring
Outcome	Communities – Reduction in worry/fear about violence Increased feeling of having a trusted adult in a young person's life

Key local challenge:

Spark2Life is a community-inspired charity that supports children and young adults affected by violence, exploitation and social injustice. Working alongside young people who are considered 'hard to reach', Spark2Life advocates for them, building trusted relationships and empowering them to rebuild their future.

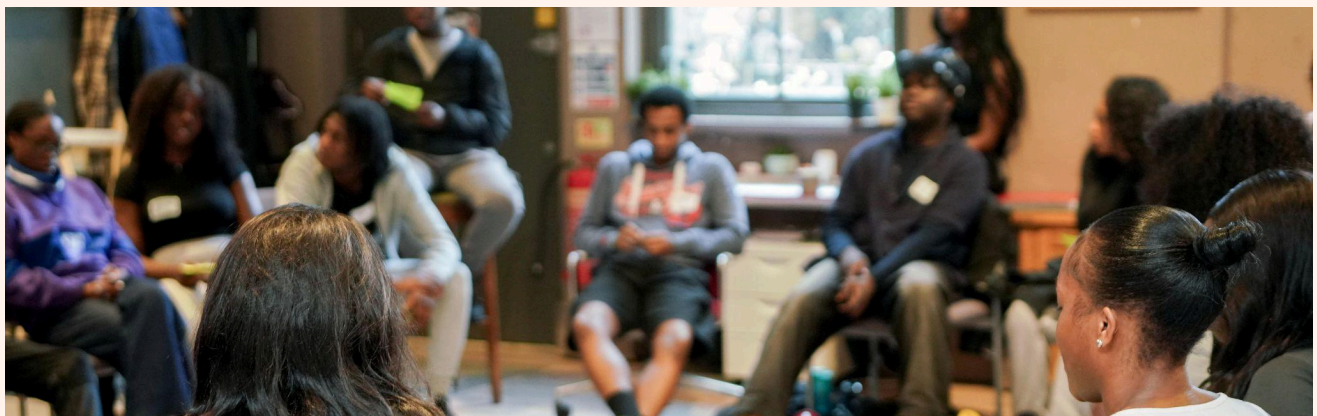
In Lewisham, Spark2Life recognised that many young people facing complex challenges were disconnected from education and employment, often as a result of vulnerability and unmet needs. Through holistic, trauma-informed support, the charity helps young people navigate the criminal justice system, make positive life choices and prevent harm whilst promoting life.



What happened?

Spark2Life did two things to help these young people:

- They recruited two mentors from key Lewisham areas who knew about the local context and challenge, and they would be on the streets weekly, talking to young people, community members, and business owners about what was happening in the area.
- They offered young people they spoke to on the streets the opportunity to have one-on-one mentorship, for young people to talk to a trusted adult in a safe environment. Sessions included talking about relationships, family, friends, and purpose.



What was the impact?

The mentoring programme provides consistent, trusted support for young people who are navigating complex challenges and may be vulnerable to exploitation or harm. Through positive relationships and trauma-informed guidance, mentors help young people rebuild confidence, strengthen decision-making skills and feel empowered in shaping their own futures. When they began mentoring, 12 out of 15 mentees were at risk of exclusion. 8 out of 15 mentees have had

onward referrals to education settings, while all 15 mentees have been signposted to some form of education, training, or work experience activity. Mentees shared that, through this support, they began to have better self-esteem, a more established identity, and this feeds directly into their purpose or goals they wanted to achieve, including in education, apprenticeships and employment.

One young person had been out of school for over two years, with an outdated Education, Health and Care Plan that didn't work for them anymore. Through patience and consistency, the mentor built a trusted relationship with both the young person and their family. This created a safe space to understand the challenges they were facing, including feelings of frustration, social isolation and lack of support in education. Recognising the young person's needs and connecting with the professional network, the mentor advocated on their behalf with the local authority to ensure they received appropriate educational and specialist support. This included support around school reintegration and a review of their Education, Health and Care Plan. As a result, the young person now has greater access to tailored professional support, and the family remains closely connected to Spark2Life, feeling more confident navigating systems that previously felt overwhelming.

Through the conversations Spark2Life have been having with community members, they have been helping older residents change their perception of young people, seeing them in a more positive light and wanting to create a sense of shared safety. This shift has created a safer, more supportive environment where young people are no longer viewed only through the lens of local tensions, but as individuals with the potential to achieve positive outcomes. In a community focus group, local residents have reported feeling safer in their community, and have noticed less violence affecting young people, which they attribute to the detached youth work alongside other work from My Lewisham.

"My Spark2Life caseworker helped me feel happier, and motivated. He was there for me, no matter what. He trusted me and that I can do better, and this helped me trust myself."

– young person working with Spark2Life

+ Increased

Confidence

+ Increased

Community connection

+ Increased

Engagement with education and employment opportunities

What were the key ingredients?

- Local expertise: Recruiting staff who are residents of the specific estates or areas of focus ensures an immediate understanding of the local context and challenges.
- Consistent visible presence: Regular foot patrols and street-based outreach in identified hot spots build familiarity and trust, allowing detached teams to bridge the gap between professionals and young people outside of crisis moments.
- Contextual safeguarding approach: Detached workers focus on the external environment by engaging shop owners, neighbours, and community leaders to change the outlook of the community and reclaim public spaces.
- Targeted education and employment support: Mentoring conversations are used to build the confidence needed to engage in education and employment, resulting in direct signposting to apprenticeships, college, or specialised vocational training.

Insights for wider practice

This close collaboration between two interventions demonstrates how detached work and mentoring can work together to reach and engage with high-risk young people. A focus on contextual safeguarding by not only supporting the individual but also actively connecting with and strengthening the community environment addresses communal tensions and begins to repair relationships and trust. Practitioners who combine their local contextual knowledge and unconditional visible support solidify trust and prove they are truly in the corner of those most alienated from statutory services.



Strengthening local partnerships

Insights from DPE activity, as well as the data reported by My Lewisham, suggest that the Consortium is embedding itself within the local strategic framework, fostering significantly improved collaboration.

The Consortium lead (Power the Fight) is well-connected, ensuring representation on critical local boards such as MACE and Violence Reduction panels, and smoother information sharing between key partners. In a survey for system partners, 75% of respondents (n=3/4) rated the partnership as "very effective". They attributed this success to the Consortium's deep engagement with the local community. System partners also said that the Consortium has influenced multi-agency work by providing earlier identification of youth needs, improved networking, and better referral pathways.

"Very positive experience. I have seen great community engagement with young people & community members, i.e. Spark2Life"

– System leader

We also learned of several examples of the Consortium working together to tackle previously identified challenges from My Lewisham's monitoring reports. For instance, there were hurdles in finalising information-sharing agreements with the council, and police delayed response speeds. Hence, the Consortium implemented a joint risk register to facilitate collaboration with those at the highest risk. Another local barrier is ensuring coverage of borough-wide boundaries; hence, the Consortium is continuing to develop key relationships, actively linking with the Lewisham Youth Alliance to influence and inform the borough's new local youth offer.

Capacity building with the Grassroots Sector

From My Lewisham's Quarterly Monitoring Data, survey, and workshops with grantees, we heard that My Lewisham is focused on enabling small, grassroots organisations to try new ideas and 'test and learn'.

Application process

3.7/5

Average rating of support received during the application process

Out of the 3 respondents to the survey for onward grants applicants, 2 found the application process easy, and 1 found it neutral. Lewisham's Quarterly Monitoring Data noted that the labour-intensive nature of grant-making can reduce the time available for support, engagement and development. To support applicants, the Consortium delivered workshops based on questions asked in the grant application forms, to ensure the training is "very practical and relevant to the needs of the local grassroots sector.

Capability building support

3.7/5

Average rating of support received since applying

Overall, the support offered by My Lewisham for grassroots organisations was rated 3.7 out of 5 (based on 3 respondents), suggesting that there is some room for growth. When asked how My Lewisham could improve the support, people asked for more ad hoc conversations, more one-to-one support with funding and opportunities for networking with other organisations.

Impact of the grant

We heard how the onward grant programme enabled small organisations to launch new initiatives, such as a podcast project, and build relationships across different community centres to pave the way for future work. Another grant specifically enabled free boxing and fitness training for young people, creating a safe environment to build physical strength, discipline, and mental well-being. Grantees reported that the support helped them build internal capacity and showcase the work they developed during their projects.

"Overall the onward grant has not only supported our immediate goals but also empowered us to make a lasting impact on the physical and mental wellbeing of our community through boxing and fitness."

– Member of grassroots organisation (onward grantee)

Learning Points

The insights gathered suggest that My Lewisham is consistently working with the community and young people to involve them at all stages of their work.

Drawing on the insights from My Lewisham as well as learning developed from across the Consortiums, there are some opportunities for growth for My Lewisham to further deepen their impact locally:

- **Consider how to reach wider stakeholders:** My Lewisham are reporting reaching a wide range of community and young people, but reporting reaching very few wider stakeholders like parents/ carers. While this may be due to underreporting, given that provision for parents was a local gap identified in the CNA, this may be a stakeholder group to strategically increase engagement with, through targeted activities and outreach.
- **Improve cross-agency communication:** Community partners identified a need for better communication and follow-through between statutory partners (police/council) and community members to ensure a smooth response. Ensuring consistent communication and feedback channels will continue to strengthen community involvement and trust in the Consortium.
- **Sustain momentum:** Community members shared in workshops that the Consortium should not pause when things are calm or better, but must keep working to maintain stability. Earlier involvement from community members and partners will ensure responses are streamlined.
- **Ensure clear feedback implementation and follow-through:** As only 34% of young people and community members agreed that they have definitely seen the Consortium use the feedback to make changes (n=16/48), closing the feedback loop remains a priority for Lewisham.
- **Reduce capacity strain:** In workshops, some community members shared that they feel they are sometimes "working very hard alone," pointing to a need for opportunities to increase connectivity among the community. This is central to reducing isolated efforts and supporting joined-up working within the Consortium.
- **Review approach to grassroots capability building:** Consider how to build more opportunities for grassroots organisations to build their skills and approaches through training sessions and other ad hoc advice and coaching, drawing on learning from other MyEnds Consortiums about what works and what doesn't.

Learn more

<https://www.powerthefight.org.uk/my-lewisham/>