



Winter Wellbeing 2015/2016

Evaluation Report

May 2016

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1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

North London Cares' 2015/16 Winter Wellbeing project, the fifth that we have delivered consecutively, has been the **most ambitious and comprehensive** to date. Commissioned by Camden and Islington joint Public Health departments and supported by the Octopus Foundation, we worked in partnership with Age UK Camden and Age UK Islington to help neighbours over the age of 65 to stay **warm, active, and healthy and connected** during the most isolating time of the year.

Our Winter Wellbeing team of professional community outreach officers and North London Cares volunteers knocked on **4,000 doors**, speaking face-to-face with **1,710 older neighbours**, and talking to a further **527 people over the telephone** through our partnerships with Age UK Camden and Age UK Islington. In total 441 people received further help – or “interventions” – as a result of those initial interactions. The project allowed us to reach some of the most isolated older neighbours in our home boroughs including people who might otherwise fall through gaps in the provision of mainstream services, as well as to provide **reassurance and build community** at an otherwise difficult time.

The overall response to the project was very positive. Across both boroughs **89% of the people we surveyed to evaluate the work agreed that the intervention or activity they were referred for adequately addressed their needs**. Encouragingly for North London Cares, which aims to “connect people and build communities” to combat social isolation, **the most important aspect of the project according to 65% of the people we surveyed was the reassurance that the community was looking out for them**. 93% said that door knocking activities should continue next year.

The headline numbers highlight the importance of sustained council investment to allow year-on-year improvements to a project which has increasingly been at the frontline of preventative winter health and wellbeing provisions. Over the past two years, significant investment by the local authorities as well as a closer working partnership with those commissioners have allowed North London Cares to deliver a more ambitious and efficient project. It has also helped us to increase the number of older neighbours we connect to local statutory and community services by **60% year-on-year** – showing that there is a real need for this type of community outreach programme.

Whilst the Winter Wellbeing project has expanded in scope and quality over each of the past five years there remain areas in which we would like to improve the work. Bringing forward the commissioning date, for example, would allow us to deliver a **pro-active** as well as a reactive campaign, helping neighbours to connect to local services and activities ahead of the cold snap in January and February, and allowing more creative outreach, flexibility and tighter management across the whole of the project.

This more preventative approach is vital in the context of increasing winter pressures on the NHS, the **rapidly growing population of older people** in Camden and Islington, the increased likelihood of more extreme weather events, and further imminent reductions in local authority budgets across departments.



2.0 INTRODUCTION

Since 2011 North London Cares has worked with local authorities and other community partners on our Winter Wellbeing (previously “Winter Warmth” and “The Big Chill”) project. The aim of the project is to make sure that older people in Camden and Islington can stay **warm, active, healthy and connected** during the potentially isolating winter months, when days are short, the cold weather can make people fearful of going out and morbidity and mortality dramatically increase.¹

The Winter Wellbeing project aims to complement and deepen the work of statutory services by offering a **proactive community outreach dimension**. From a strategic public health perspective there are two ambitions. The first is to make contact with older neighbours who may be **housebound or isolated**, to ensure that people who might otherwise be unforthcoming in accessing mainstream public services do not fall through the gaps in statutory provision. The second objective is to take a **preventative approach**, identifying concerns early on so that they do not become emergency cases.

The core of the Winter Wellbeing project is therefore based around door knocking at the homes of people over 65 in Camden and Islington, to provide accessible, relatable interactions and interventions to potentially vulnerable neighbours through a combination of **conversations, friendships, provisions and referrals** to health and social services, as well as community activities including those provided by North London Cares directly.

This is an opportunity to **identify** – and support – some of our more **socially isolated** neighbours. Interactions can have immediate as well as ongoing benefits, as neighbours can begin to participate in North London Cares’ year round Social Clubs and Love Your Neighbour (one-to-one) programmes.

This is the fifth year that North London Cares has carried out the Winter Wellbeing project in Islington, and the third year in Camden. Each year the project has broadened in scope and ambition. As well as being commissioned and supported by the Camden and Islington Public Health departments, this year North London Cares also partnered with Age UK Camden and Age UK Islington. The aim of this new partnership was to

¹ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-34919149>

integrate targeted provisions for older people by distributing literature and ensuring that neighbours were signposted to the help and activities available in the boroughs.

This report outlines the impact of the above work, setting out the aims, methods, results and evaluations we have made in order to make the project even more relevant in future.



3.0 CONTEXT

Centrally located within the capital and with an already diverse culture and demographics, Camden and Islington were two of the earliest London boroughs to be altered by the **globalisation, digitisation, migration and gentrification** that have re-shaped so much of the city in recent years.

This level of social mix gives both boroughs an enormous amount of vibrancy and dynamism. But it also means that **social challenges** and **public health inequalities** are at times magnified in ways they might not be elsewhere.

This is particularly true among many of the older people North London Cares seeks to support. Many of the neighbours we meet through the Winter Wellbeing project and our other core activities feel **isolated from the world and services around them**, which they often believe are changing too fast and are beyond their control and understanding.

Meanwhile, changes in the environment have led to people feeling anxious about **unpredictable weather**², and particularly about the isolating potential of very **cold, dark winters**. 2012/13 brought repeated heavy snow and at least five bitterly cold snaps right up until April. This creates specific health risks and generally increases **morbidity and mortality**, which are now at their highest rates since 1999³. It also makes socialising or visiting relatives harder, negatively affecting people's wellbeing and **adding to mental and physical health vulnerabilities longer term**.

The majority of excess winter deaths occur in people aged over 75 years, as well as people with respiratory diseases, circulatory diseases, dementia and Alzheimer's⁴. These are all conditions prevalent amongst older people. 70% of people in Camden and Islington aged 65 and over are diagnosed with one or more long-term condition, and 61% are diagnosed with multiple long-term conditions⁵. This makes them more **susceptible to the effects of cold**.

² <https://northlondoncares.org.uk/blog/community-resilience-project-the-full-report>

³ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-34919149>

⁴ <http://strategicsociety.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Cold-Enough-Excess-Winter-Deaths-Winter-Fuel-Payments-and-the-UKs-problem-with-the-cold.pdf>

⁵ <http://www.phoutcomes.info/public-health-outcomes-framework#gid/1000044/pat/6/ati/102/page/0/par/E12000007/are/E09000007>

Moreover, this challenge is growing in our two boroughs, as the proportion of people aged over 65 years is increasing. Currently people aged over 65 make up 9% of the population in Islington and 11% in Camden. This is expected to increase by 20% in Islington and 16% in Camden over the next 10 years.⁶

This project has therefore been designed, commissioned and delivered to ensure that the **community and public health infrastructure** is in place to support a growing number of potentially vulnerable older neighbours to keep well and warm during winter – and in an attempt to improve services, make them more relatable and accessible, and ultimately to save local authority and health services money.

North London Cares' additional aim is to **combat social and generational divides** by building a community network of young professionals spending time with and supporting their older neighbours. Winter Wellbeing is a key part of this vision. It softens the effects of problems presented during the harshest part of the year and seeks to ensure that local older people **do not feel left behind** by isolating weather conditions, the pace of change around them, or the perceived remote nature of some statutory services.

⁶ Taken from 'The Mayor and Burgesses of the London Borough of Islington and North London Cares Agreement for the Provision of a Winter Wellbeing Programme', 22 December 2015.

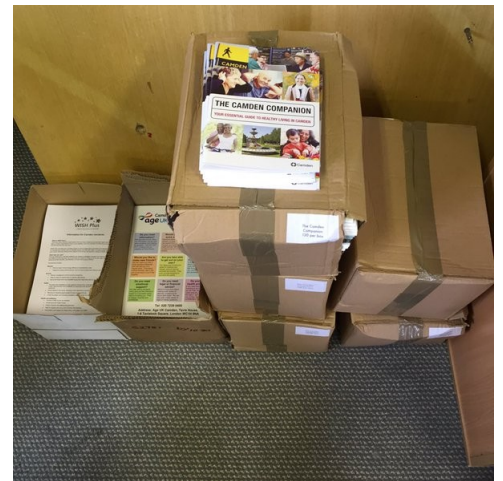
4.0 AIMS

Camden and Islington Councils' joint Public Health department commissioned North London Cares' Winter Wellbeing 2015/16 project in December 2015. The **key aims** of the project were:

- “To enable **older and vulnerable** residents to remain **safe and warm** within their own homes through **preventative** activities targeting exposure to excess cold and fuel poverty;
- To **improve the access** for older and vulnerable residents to health and housing services, grants and benefits that they are eligible for through **information and direct referral** into these services;
- To ensure older and vulnerable residents that are socially isolated are **identified and linked into community activities** such as befriending services and other existing community activities.”

In order to fulfill the aims of the project, North London Cares, Age UK Camden and Age UK Islington pledged to:

- Target older and vulnerable neighbours living in **social housing** and make opportunistic visits to vulnerable neighbours living in private rented accommodation;
- Target priority wards and neighbours in Camden and Islington through a **door knocking** and telephone campaign targeted at over-65s;
- Distribute **resources and leaflets** outlining existing health, housing and social care services in order to:
 - Promote discussions about maintaining good winter health, including through:
 - Flu vaccinations;
 - Heating checks and home insulation;



- Ensuring sufficient food is in place;
- Preventing falls;
 - Offering handyman work;
- Work closely with the WISH+ and SHINE teams in Camden and Islington to **address wider issues** potentially impacting on individuals' health;
- Offer follow up visits to people identified as being **socially isolated**;
- Link people socially isolated or at risk of social isolation into **community based social activities** (provided by North London Cares and other partners);
- Provide emergency support such as **warm clothing and blankets**, hot meals or one-off small grants to people identified as being **most in need**;
- Follow up with neighbours who received one of the interventions above to ensure they were **satisfied and secure**.



5.0 DELIVERY

The Winter Wellbeing project is made up of a number of interactions and interventions, which together comprise the **pro-active outreach approach** that North London Cares has built over five years to identify isolation and connect older neighbours to the community. Specifically, those interactions and interventions are: door knocking, business engagement, speaking at community events, media coverage, follow-up calls to ensure quality and mop-up calls to augment the door knocking effort. This section summarises each area of that outreach effort in turn.

5.1 Door knocking

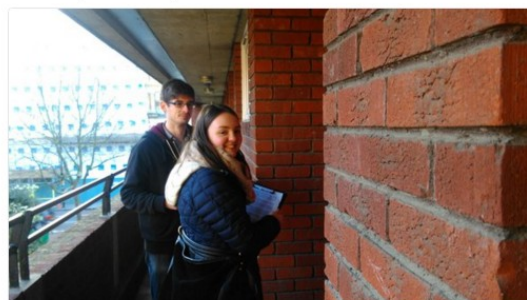
North London Cares set out to knock on 2,000 doors in Camden and 2,000 in Islington. We targeted neighbours aged over 65 who lived alone in council housing in the **most deprived areas** – specifically Haverstock, Queen’s Crescent, Regent’s Park, Kentish Town and Kilburn in Camden and Holloway, Archway, Old Street, Caledonian Road and Finsbury Park in Islington. Lists of those older neighbours were secured from Camden and Islington Councils’ Housing department, and shared with North London Cares by encrypted data transfer.

Each of those 4,000 neighbours received a letter co-sent on behalf of North London Cares and Camden and Islington Councils in advance of our visit, in order to introduce the project and its aims. As a result of these letters we received scores of phone calls. Many people asked for specific help, others simply thanked us and said they didn’t require any assistance at that particular time. Regardless, the letter helped **legitimise the project** and **reassured neighbours** who might otherwise have been sceptical about a knock on the door from a stranger.

Whether we managed to speak to neighbours on the doorstep or not, every one of the 4,000 neighbours targeted received:



Thank you to our wonderful Winter Wellbeing volunteers - checking in with neighbours in Old Street yesterday



RETWEETS
3

LIKES
2



3:00 AM - 17 Jan 2016

- 1) A North London Cares **Winter Wellbeing leaflet** with a contact telephone number and information about the interventions and interactions available, as well as a reminder to get flu and pneumonia jabs;
- 2) A **council brochure** about staying warm and well during winter.

In Camden we also distributed information about Age UK Camden and WISH+ services, further layering the partnership and introducing additional local activity programmes.

For neighbours in need of specific assistance we offered a range of interventions, including:

- Delivery of **blankets, jumpers, scarves, hats, and socks** when people were struggling with the cold;
- Provision of **hardship grants of up to £100** for people suffering from fuel poverty and rapidly changing circumstances related to the winter which might deepen isolation and/or anxiety;
- Signposting to North London Cares' **Social Clubs** and **Love Your Neighbour** programmes, and introductions to the core North London Cares staff running those projects where appropriate;
- **Referrals** to Wish+ (Camden) and SHINE (Islington) for people in need of:
 - Urgent resolution of **broken boilers** and other heating issues;
 - A visit from an '**energy doctor**' to help insulate or warm their homes;
 - **Financial advice** on cold weather payments or other welfare benefits;
 - Other domestic support – for example home repair work;
- Other referrals to Council or other agencies, where necessary, aiming to address more serious issues such as **complex mental health problems**, physical health and **occupational therapy needs**, and social care provisions.

5.2 Business engagement

As in previous years, and based on the Winter Wellbeing 2014/15 evaluation recommendations, this year we sought to **layer our message** and increase the credibility

of the campaign by working with local businesses, particularly on and around estates



What better way to warm up a chilly day in Kilburn than a hearty fish pie with friends at Men's Cooking.



RETWEETS 2

5:18 AM - 12 Jan 2016

where we focused our door knocking, by distributing flyers for display on counters and in shop windows.

Specifically we targeted small businesses that tend to be visited by more isolated older people: betting shops, pharmacies, cafes, pubs and laundrettes. Libraries across Camden and Islington also promoted the project by distributing North London Cares' Winter Wellbeing flyers to their memberships.

Based on previous years' experience and

recommendations, however, which demonstrated comparatively low returns from engagement with local business, this area of work was secondary to door knocking and other outreach activities.

5.3 Community events

This year we increased the number of people we spoke to at community events in day centres and community centres to 191. Our older neighbours were also introduced to the Winter Wellbeing project at North London Cares social clubs across Camden and Islington. This also helped layer the message and gained us advocates for the project that helped us to promote Winter Wellbeing in their communities.

5.4 Media

We worked with three local newspapers – the Camden New Journal, Islington Tribune and the Ham & High7 – to promote this year's project. These titles are trusted by local people including older neighbours and helped to improve the visibility and recognition of the project.



5.5 Follow-up calls

All referrals to local authorities were submitted through the SHINE/WISH+ portals on the same day that the first interaction occurred. Warm clothes, blankets and fuel grants were delivered in as timely way as possible – and always between one day and one week after the initial interaction. We checked in with everyone that received a deeper intervention within four weeks of meeting them, normally over the telephone. Once they had received their deeper intervention we conducted a **follow-up survey** to ensure the project had addressed their needs and to help us improve the project’s management in future.

5.6 Mop-up calls

This project attempted to call every neighbour on our Council-provided lists whom we were unable to reach through door knocking, to ensure they were staying warm, active, healthy and connected. Age UK Camden conducted all of the follow up calls in Camden. In Islington the calls were split, with North London Cares telephoning 400 people and Age UK Islington attempting 100.

5.7 Activity timeline

This project aims to help people stay warm and well during the coldest and most isolating time of the year – the winter. The work was commissioned on the last day of November, and geared up in the second week of December. Its most active outreach period has always been in January and February, when the isolating effects of the season are at their deepest, and snow is often expected. The project was completed in March, and evaluated throughout April.

	December	January	February	March	April
Targeted letter					
Business engagement					
Mapping data/routes					
Door knocking					
Community events					
Follow up calls					
Mop up calls					
Evaluation & Report					

6.0 PROJECT SUMMARY

6.1 The project in numbers

This year, Winter Wellbeing was **bigger than ever**, with more doors knocked, more calls made, and more “deeper interventions” than in previous years. **Specifically:**

- **4,000 doors** were knocked (3,601 last year) – 2,000 in each borough;
- **3,979 leaflets** containing cold weather information were posted or handed directly to older neighbours at events, with hundreds more displayed in community spaces and businesses (3,645 last winter) – 1,969 in Camden, 2,010 in Islington;
- **1,710 face-to-face interactions** were held (1,692 last year) – 829 in Camden, 881 in Islington;
- **527 phone interactions** were also held – 260 in Camden and 267 in Islington;
- **441 people** received specific help (278 last year) – 204 in Camden, 237 in Islington;
- **30 fuel grants of up to £100** were distributed – 15 in each borough;
- **72 blankets** were delivered to older neighbours – 38 in Camden, 33 in Islington;
- **51 people** were given **warm clothes including** hats, socks, scarves and gloves – 33 in Camden, 18 in Islington;
- **278 people** were referred to the Council for further services – 129 in Camden, 159 in Islington;
- **216 people** were spoken with at local events – 113 in Camden, 103 in Islington;
- The project mobilised **40 young professional volunteers**, predominantly from our corporate partners and especially co-funders Octopus Investments.

6.2 Breakdown by borough

Table 1 (below) shows that we knocked on the same number of doors in each borough but had more interactions and made more interventions in Islington. We also made more interventions as a proportion of neighbours we spoke to overall in Islington – 21% versus 19% in Camden.

This may reflect the fact that we conducted more outreach in Islington during the height of winter (because we received these addresses first) when need was more acute and neighbours were more likely to be at home as a result of the colder weather. It could also reflect higher need in the borough, but it's difficult to say with any certainty as the difference in the proportion of those wanting a deeper intervention in each borough was relatively small.

Table 1: Borough by borough breakdown

	Camden	Islington
Doors knocked	2,000	2,000
Face to face interactions	829	881
Phone interactions	260	267
Neighbour interventions	204	237

Table 2 (next page) shows that most of the deeper interventions came as a result of face-to-face interactions on the doorstep: 6% of doors knocked in Camden and 8.5% in Islington. A proportionally higher number came from mop-up calls (phone calls with those we were originally unable to contact) – 10% of calls made in Camden and 9% in Islington.

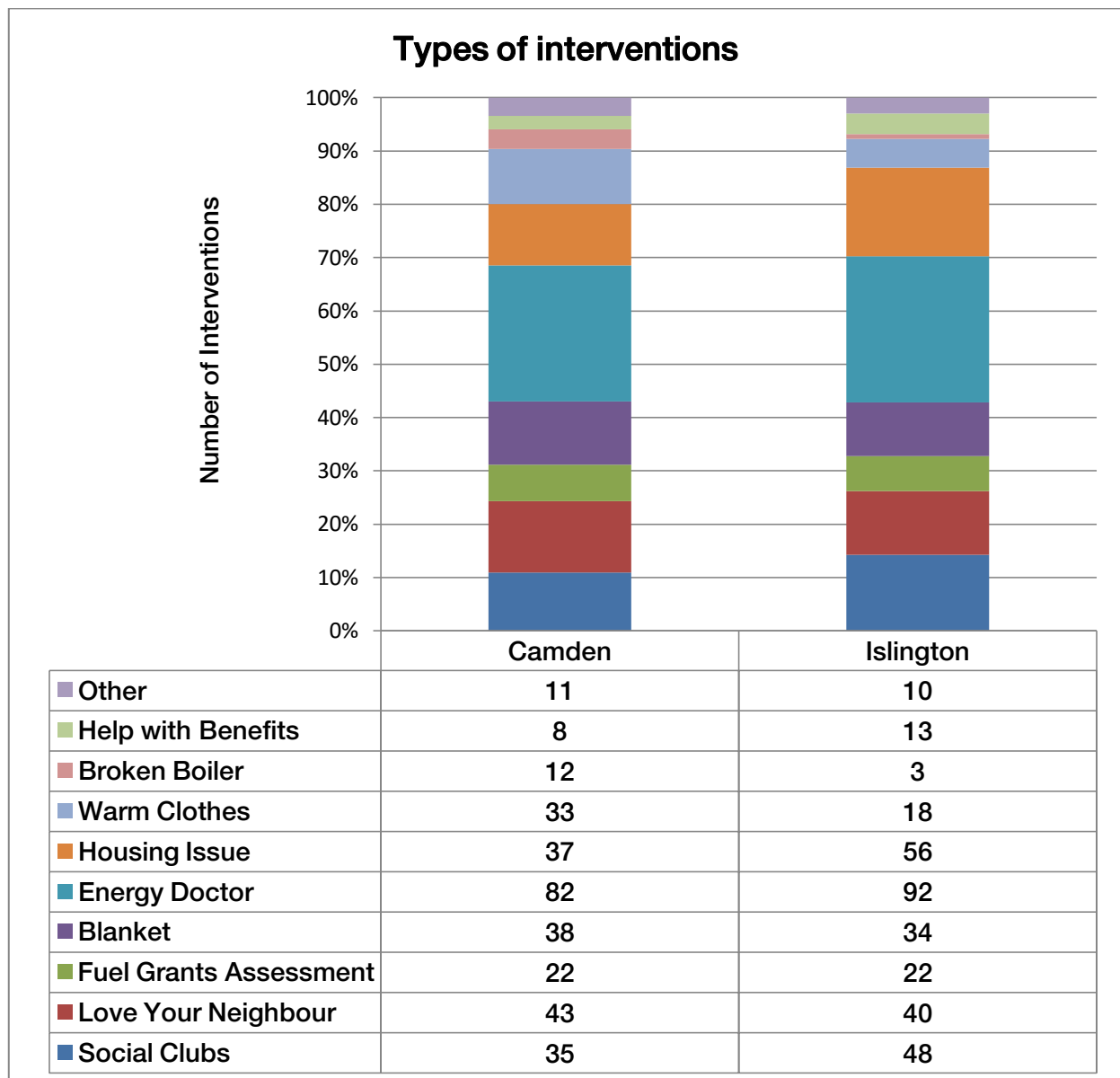
Fewer neighbours received a deeper intervention as a result of calling us after receiving a letter or leaflet alone, although it did allow some people in the most difficult circumstances to contact us at the beginning of the project – rather than waiting for a door knock.

Fewer interventions were made as a result of conversations we had at community events.

Table 2: Source of deeper interventions

	Camden	Islington
Door knocking	125	170
Mop up calls	49	46
Letter/leaflet	22	16
Events	4	2

Graph 1: Types of interventions



Graph 1 (above) contains a complete breakdown of the types of deeper intervention we made in each borough. 278 people were referred to the Council for further services – 129 in Camden and 159 in Islington through the WISH+ and SHINE portals respectively. Many

neighbours had multiple and overlapping needs, a breakdown of which are above. There are small differences between Camden and Islington; we distributed more warm clothes and blankets in Camden but the demand for Energy Doctor and housing related issues (including occupational therapy) was higher in Islington.

6.3 Analysis

During the course of the work we had several reflections about the effectiveness and importance of the project. Specifically, we believe:

- The numbers show that we interacted with and connected more people to statutory services than ever before. The **demand for deeper interventions was higher than in previous years**. It's difficult to say with any certainty why this was but it's clear that there is ongoing and seemingly growing demand for the project.
- The reaction to our visits and phone calls was **overwhelmingly positive**. The pre-visit letters and a mention that we were working in collaboration with the council, as well as the **people skills** of our outreach officers, helped us to gain trust on the doorstep quickly.
- The most common response on the doorstep was that neighbours didn't need any specific practical help but that they were **grateful for the conversation** and felt **reassured** that they had a **number to call** and a recognisable community group to lean on in case of future difficulties.
- The messaging of “warm, active, healthy and connected” was **clear and understandable**. It was initially easier to talk about the most tangible requirements such as **warmth and health**; this often allowed us to bridge into sometimes more challenging conversations about **loneliness and isolation**.
- Door knocking is still the most effective way to reach out to and talk with older neighbours. Over 65% of the deeper interventions we made came from door knocking. Initially fearful or sceptical neighbours can be helped to feel quickly at ease by an empathetic **face-to-face interaction**. We believe that high quality face-to-face interactions also have a more lasting effect in building **community**

cohesion and lessening isolation than phone calls and letters alone.

- The combination of outreach methods – the letters, door knocking and phone calls – meant that the most isolated neighbours were less likely to fall through potential gaps in statutory provision. The pre-visit letter meant that **those in urgent need phoned** us immediately. 99 referrals were made as a result of calling those we were originally unable to door knock.
- Every neighbour we spoke to was reminded about flu jabs and our flyer also reminded them about having the one-off pneumococcal and shingles jabs. Almost everyone was aware that the **flu jab was freely available** and encouraged. A few neighbours said that they were **glad of a reminder** and that they would have the flu jab as a result of our conversation. The vast majority of neighbours had either had their flu jabs already or felt strongly against having one for a variety of passionately held views – perceived ineffectiveness and previous negative reactions were the most commonly cited. Many were unaware that the one-off pneumococcal and shingles jabs were encouraged and were thankful for the information.
- Because of the scale, ambition and intensity of the project, this year we better trained and supported more outreach **workers than ever before** – 6 at the height of the project in January and February. Outreach officers were **trained in-house** and ‘on the job’ by experienced outreach professionals who had managed the project in previous years. Officers were also trained in safe data collection and many received dementia training, helping them to be better **prepared for all eventualities** and interactions on the doorstep. These improvements added to the quality and effectiveness of the project.
- Working with **40 volunteers** (including people from North London Cares’ corporate partner Octopus Investments, community groups from our community network of 1,700 young professionals) over five ‘volunteer days’ added a valuable dimension to the project. It helped us to meet our ambitious targets and more importantly to create connections between young professionals and their neighbours who often

live side-by-side but inhabit different worlds.

- The infrastructure of the project as a whole was **professionalised**, including through secure data and records management. This is just one benefit of year-on-year funding and can be further improved in future.
- A minority of those we spoke to on the doorstep were unable to converse in English. Quite often family members were able to help, but the diversity of our boroughs can make it difficult to plan for all the necessary translations that may be required. In previous years we have produced flyers in Bengali and Somali – but realistically these were of minimal value because there are various regional dialects and myriad other languages spoken too.

6.4 Case studies

Numbers and ‘bird’s eye’ analysis only tell part of the story. The majority of older neighbours we spoke to did not feel they needed a deeper intervention but felt reassured that a friendly face, a relatable “neighbour” could be contacted in case they needed anything in the future. Countless times we were told that this was the first time that anyone from the community had knocked on their door just to check how they were getting on, and that this helped people to **feel better about the world**.

We also met many older neighbours who had gradually become isolated. These neighbours were told about North London Cares’ Love Your Neighbour project through which we create one-to-one relationships between older neighbours and young professionals so that people can achieve practical tasks like shopping and, more commonly, some **company and companionship** over a cup of tea. In addition, many other neighbours expressed interest in joining our social clubs – group activities for older and younger neighbours to enjoy together to **share time, laughter,**



friendship and new experiences. All of these interactions and chances to build new relationships help to combat isolation and loneliness.

Some neighbours who were doing well when we first interacted with them later telephoned in a crisis. Dennis from Hornsey Road phoned us on a Friday afternoon

“When you’re young, you have loads of so called friends; but when you get old, they all run away – you guys phoned at the right time.” Arthur, Kentish Town

saying that he'd run out of money and was facing a long weekend **without food or heating.** We gave Dennis a fuel grant and accompanied him to the shops – ensuring he could stay warm, fed and healthy. He was referred for benefits and debt advice to ensure he doesn't end up in a critical condition again. He told us our intervention was **“a godsend.”**

Other neighbours were in need of both practical help and more social interaction. Emma from Mornington Crescent had extensive housing problems which as a result of a referral to WISH+ are being rectified. Emma has also subsequently attended North London Cares’ social clubs. Because of our door knock she now feels warmer, more active and better connected to the community.

The importance of being out in the community was highlighted frequently. For example, on one occasion our team was out in Essex Road and were told about a neighbour who had **suffered a bereavement** and was becoming more and more isolated. We checked in on her and after a long **reassuring conversation** referred her for benefits advice. We are now in the process of creating a Love Your Neighbour match with a young professional to help **boost her confidence** and language skills.

“This is great, it's so much better than watching a film alone. I only expected a cup of tea, but the sandwiches and cakes are brilliant!”
Sam, Islington

On another occasion when we were out in Clerkenwell we were told that a neighbour hadn't been seen for days and people were worried about him. On that occasion we notified the housing manager and the neighbour was located. It was a clear example of how being **active in the community** can help prevent neighbours from falling through the gaps of statutory services.

“I think it’s great what you’re doing, rebuilding community.” Harry,

7.0 EVALUATION

7.1 Survey Results

In order to confirm the value of Winter Wellbeing's deeper interventions and to learn more about how to improve the project for future years, North London Cares had initially planned to speak to all of the 445 people who received a deeper intervention. This proved impossible.

We made 301 attempts but found that 94 people had not yet received their deeper intervention – each of these in the case of referrals to Wish+ and SHINE. We couldn't complete surveys with a further 17 people due to poor hearing, loss of memory, ill health or language barriers. 24 people did not want to complete the survey.

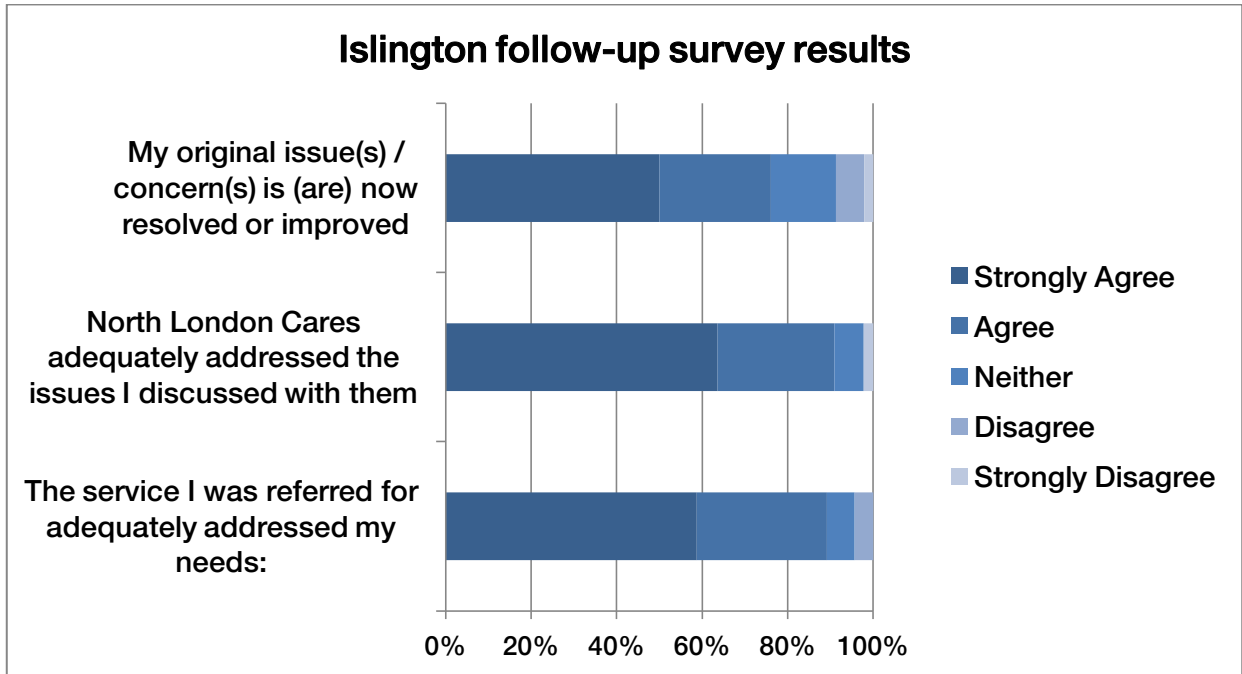
We might expect that neighbours who hadn't received the service they had hoped for in time for us to survey them about it would be less satisfied with the project overall. As stated in previous Winter Wellbeing evaluations, we believe more resource could be appropriated for Wish+ and SHINE to help speed up these internal processes.

In the end, we conducted **100 follow up surveys** with neighbours who had received deeper interventions, 50 in each borough. The overall response to the surveys was equally positive across both boroughs:

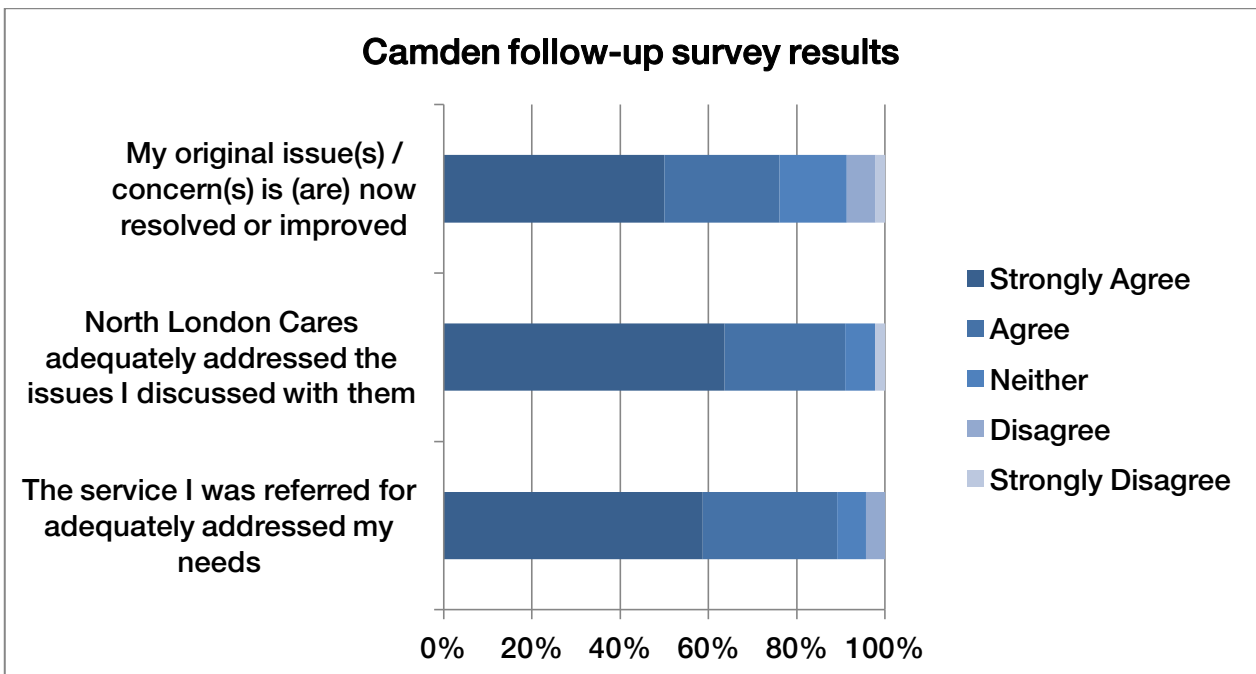
- 89% either agreed or strongly agreed that the service they were referred for adequately addressed their needs;
- 88% either agreed or strongly agreed that North London Cares adequately addressed the issues discussed with them;
- 76% either agreed or strongly agreed that their original issues or concerns were now resolved or improved;

These numbers are visualised in Graphs 2 and 3 (on page 23).

Graph 2: Islington follow-up survey results



Graph 3: Camden Follow-up Survey Results



It's clear that people who received a deeper intervention saw the value of the project:

- 61% said it made them feel better connected;
- 57% said it improved their health and wellbeing;
- 35% said it improved their housing issues;
- 22% said it improved their financial issues.

It was also highly encouraging that neighbours who received a deeper intervention saw the value of the project not only for themselves but for the community too. In fact, the most important aspect of the project according to 65% of people surveyed was the reassurance that the community was looking out for them. 93% said that door knocking activities should continue next year.

7.2 Interviews

As part of the evaluation of the Winter Warmth campaign Camden and Islington joint Public Health Departments commissioned an independent evaluation through 10 semi-structured face to face interviews with neighbours that had received a deeper intervention.⁸

'I'm just grateful that, to think that, uh, you know, there are people that are prepared to come and help us. You know, that's, um, it's nice to know that, um, we're being looked after and there's somebody that cares.' **Female, 90**

The aim was to evaluate what the impact of the winter wellness campaign has been on residents' health and wellbeing (key areas are social isolation, health- uptake of vaccinations, access to healthcare when needed, warmth, finances) and on local service uptake and use.

'I feel special now...'cos they've give the confidence to speak to people now, because I'm a bit shy and that really...They've made it so easy and that...any difficult questions or anything just, they just say phone us up.' **Male, 68**

It found that "In summary, the positive influence that the Winter Wellness Campaign has had on the residents has helped them emotionally, financially and physically, beyond just their housing, health, social and financial needs. The information and services provided have been useful to the participants and delivered by staff who are friendly and approachable. The services provided to the residents have had an impact on their mobility within their home predominantly."

⁸ Independent Evaluation of the Winter Wellness Campaign 2015-2016 for London Borough of Camden and Islington Council, Dr Chloe Sharp, May 2016

8.0 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE PROJECTS

North London Cares is a learning organisation. We seek to constantly improve the way we operate and to give everyone we work with the best possible experience. Throughout the delivery of this project, therefore, we have always borne in mind ways that we can improve, both in real time and for future Winter Wellbeing projects. Specifically, we believe each of the following changes will make the 2016/17 project richer, deeper, more integrated and more manageable:

8.1 Earlier commissioning and improved forward planning

Commissioning the project earlier in the year, rather than in November and December, would allow us to reach more neighbours in a timely way. This would help us to be more proactive in the earlier stages of winter, and therefore make the project more **preventative**. It will allow neighbours to receive home improvements, financial help or deeper connections in time for the height of winter in January and February, rather than beginning the conversation at that same time. Outreach could begin as early as late autumn, with communications tweaked to prepare people for the oncoming winter. Earlier commissioning will also allow us to plan the project more efficiently and to stagger outreach and delivery – for example to account for any extreme weather warning (which did not occur this year).

8.2 Multi-year commissioning

We believe that commissioning the project for three to five years would allow us to vastly improve the project, both year-on-year and over the longer period. It would permit better **forward planning** and more up-front project investment. It would enable us to **allocate resources more effectively**, bringing in outreach officers and **training them** well ahead of the project start date. It would also enable us to further **improve our data protection** procedures and to run an even more **balanced programme**.

8.3 Pre-visit letters

This year, for the first time, all neighbours received a letter from North London Cares and the commissioning councils prior to their visit. The letter helped legitimise the project and reassure neighbours ahead of their doorstep conversation. As a result of the letter we received **scores of phone calls** during the early stage of the project – a very positive development. In future, letters could be **dispatched earlier**, perhaps in late November –

and **staggered across several weeks** so that we can better manage and spread the **influx of calls**.

8.4 Mop-up calls

Neighbours whom we were unable to reach through door knocking received a call from Age UK Camden, Age UK Islington or North London Cares. The collaboration was a valuable addition to the project. It allowed us to inform neighbours of a wider range of services available in the borough and ultimately to reach more neighbours. We also sent a list of those we were unable to reach by door knocking or by phone to Camden Housing for extra follow up; we believe this became an important aspect of the project and would like to **extend the pilot to Islington** next year.

8.5 Better targeting the most isolated

This year we knocked on 2,000 doors and conducted 500 mop-up calls in each borough. For the first three quarters of the project we focused on **single occupancy households** in order to find a majority of people who live alone, but towards the end of the project we also focused on multi-occupancy households. We found that people in multi-occupancy households were generally in less acute need of interventions. In future years it may be beneficial to focus attention solely on single occupancy households where isolation is likely to be most common – and to **receive lists only of single occupancy households**.

8.6 Improving follow up surveys and check-ins

The results of the follow-up surveys we conducted to inform and strengthen this evaluation showed that neighbours on the whole were very happy with the interventions they received. At times, though, the survey felt like a blunt instrument – capturing data on a very personal project in quite a scientific way. In the future it would be great to have **more flexibility when following up with neighbours**. This would allow us to prioritise those in more difficult circumstances, and to work more responsively. This year we ‘checked in’ on the telephone with everyone within four weeks of delivering an intervention. For many neighbours who received a follow up intervention from their Council, services were yet to be delivered: with this in mind, we believe we could extend the check in period to **six weeks**.

8.7 Landline telephone number

As in previous years the overlaying North London Cares Winter Wellbeing leaflet contained a mobile number for neighbours to call. The pre-visit letters contained the same mobile number. Clearly a landline number would be preferable for legitimacy and

cost reasons but this has hitherto been difficult because North London Cares has historically been in temporary shared office accommodation. This was rectified mid-way through this year's project, and we will **retain that landline phone number** in 2016/17 and beyond.

8.8 Data quality and transfer

One of the most difficult challenges of delivering this project was in safely and securely maintaining data on neighbours sent to North London Cares by the Councils, and shared with partner organisations. This year, to reduce the risk of data falling into the wrong hands, files were sometimes transported manually. In future years, secure transfer of data should occur solely through **encrypted programmes such as 'Egress Switch'**. Additionally, there is a significant amount of data sorting required to plan efficient door knocking routes. It would therefore be beneficial for us to receive as **much detail about neighbours as possible**, including phone numbers, to make follow-ups more informed and efficient – and to **receive the data as early** in the season as possible.

8.9 Partnership working

North London Cares is a collaborative organisation. In order to deliver year round activities we work closely with Age UK Islington, Age UK Camden and other partners in our home boroughs. However, **partnership delivery** of a project of the scale, complexity and intensity of Winter Wellbeing is **challenging**. Establishing partnership agreements, sharing data securely, and operating efficient follow-ups and records became difficult because of the partnerships and their quick arrangements in December 2015. In future we would recommend **commissioning a single organisation** to work with partners organically.

8.10 Deeper collaboration with SHINE

Our working relationship with the WISH+ and SHINE teams was very positive. WISH+ in particular had developed a process of notifying North London Cares, as the 'community facing' organisation, when a deeper intervention referred to them had been followed-up, with **information on the outcome**. This is advantageous for the referral organisation and the neighbour, and makes the **follow-up process much more efficient**. It would be similarly **beneficial for SHINE** to operate a similar **notification process** in future.

8.11 GP promotion

Gaining support for promotion of the Winter Wellbeing project from GP surgeries is a labour intensive process with varying responses. Gaining buy-in for the project from

Camden and Islington's **Clinical Commissioning Groups** would allow more efficient and widespread promotion, and more integrated service provision across the community and health sector.

8.12 Increasing the overall budget

North London Cares did not secure full cost recovery for the Winter Wellbeing 2015/16 project. With increased uptake of blankets, coats, scarves and socks, a higher door-knocking target than last year, and high partnership and staffing costs, we operated a slight overspend – and this in a year when there was not a major weather crisis. Our corporate partnerships and individual giving fundraising covered the deficit but in future years, we would recommend a budget increase to allow for a longer run in and planning period, increased costs, and the likelihood of a cold snap (with some budget reclaimable in the case that there is no severe cold weather alert). This is calculated on this year's costs, and spreading the project expenditure across at least an additional month.

9.0 CONCLUSIONS

North London Cares' 2015/16 Winter Wellbeing project, the fifth that we have delivered consecutively, has been the **most ambitious and comprehensive** to date. We knocked on more doors, engaged more volunteers, interacted with more older neighbours, and made more interventions than in previous years. This project allowed us to reach more isolated older neighbours in our home boroughs including people who might otherwise fall through the gaps in provision of mainstream public services. Across both boroughs **89% of the people we surveyed to evaluate the work either agreed or strongly agreed that the intervention or activity they were referred for adequately addressed their needs.**

But the headline statistics only tell part of the story: **the most important aspect of the project according to the older people we surveyed was the reassurance that the community was looking out for them.** That reassuring effect – and the year round impact of our complimentary programme work tackling isolation – is sometimes difficult to measure but it's clear that our neighbours value the project and its community ethos.

The improved efficiency, scale and quality of the project this year highlight the importance of sustained council investment to allow year-on-year improvements to a project which has increasingly been at the frontline of preventative winter health and wellbeing provisions. The preventative impact of the project is vital in the context of **increasing winter pressures** on the NHS, the **rapidly growing population of older people** in Camden and Islington, the increased likelihood of **more extreme weather events**, and further **imminent reductions in local authority budgets** across departments. This year we connected 60% more neighbours to local statutory and community services and activities than last year, demonstrating the deep need for this type of community outreach programme.

With 93% of older neighbours we surveyed stating that they believe that the Winter Wellbeing project should be repeated next year, we believe this project is gaining in **popularity, recognition and importance**, and we hope to be able to work with our commissioners, existing collaborators and new partners to make this project even better in 2016/17 and beyond.

May 2016