



Elders Programme Annual Report 2022/23

**Katherine Low
Settlement**

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“I’m so busy now I haven’t got time to let myself go to the dark side. I owe so much to art and especially to KLS and all the wonderful people who make it a great place to go.”

This annual report highlights the work that our Elders community programme has done over the last year, up to end-March 2023.

Our Elders programme has been generously supported by a number of independent Charitable Trusts, statutory funders and individual donors; as well as by our fabulous volunteers and partners giving their time, commitment and passion to support our amazing older members. Without your support we would not have been able to make such a difference to so many people’s lives. Thank you.

Note: Names have been changed to ensure confidentiality.

1. About Katherine Low Settlement

Katherine Low Settlement (KLS) is a busy charity that has been serving Battersea and the wider Wandsworth community since 1924. We are dedicated to building stronger communities and enable people to challenge and find ways out of poverty and isolation.

We run a range of our own community programmes to support children, young people and their families, older people, women and refugee communities. We campaign for social change. We also incubate and support small charities and social businesses to start-up and thrive. A passionate, committed and skilled team of 38 staff and 200 volunteers regularly make a difference to about 5% of the local population in Battersea.

Visit: www.klsettlement.org.uk

2. Katherine Low Settlement’s work with elders

We provide a range of projects and activities focusing on Health and Wellbeing, Creative Arts, Intergenerational Work, Connecting Neighbours & Active Participation and Trips & Outings. We are locally focused, responsive to need, co-produce our work programme and achieve effective and significant outcomes for older people.

Our successful Elders programme runs across three key areas: our Core Activity and Support Service, Age Well and Tech Up.

We always look to make a positive connection and difference to the lives of our members. Our service always strives to:

- Encourage active and independent living
- Reduce isolation and loneliness

- Improve wellbeing and prevent ill-health
- Enable our members to become dynamic and contributing members of the Wandsworth community.

Our key objective this past year has been to continue to increase the number of elders attending the centre. We have also worked with our members to increase the number and breadth of our activities. We have proactively built on our referral pathways with Social Prescribers, Link Workers, Occupational Therapy and Wandsworth Council's health and social care teams, as well as GPs. We visit them in-person and online, attend their team meetings giving presentations about the scope of our work, criteria for joining, how to refer and explore ways in which we can deepen our partnerships.

3. Our members

This year the service has 455 elder members, an increase of 27% from 2022.

We've received a surge in referrals from local partners including Social Prescribers, Wandsworth Council's Adult Social Services team and self-referrals.

Membership was 62% female, 24% male and 14% prefer not to say; with ages ranging from 45 to 98, mean average age of 74.

55% are White British, 35% Black British 5% Asian 5% not known.

10% provide unpaid care for someone – including their adult children, grandchildren, a close friend or partner.

53% have conditions that limit their daily activities, 12% have three or more such conditions. These include dementia (20%), diabetes (13%), various heart issues (10%) hearing issues (5%) stroke (4%) sight issues (3%) and cancer (3%).

12% report mental health conditions including depression, anxiety, eating disorders, personality disorders, complex post-traumatic stress disorder and psychosis.

Our **Annual Impact Survey** with our older members found that:

- 97% reported they enjoy the social interaction
- 93% reported they feel more in control of my daily life
- 82% agreed they had a wider network
- 86% felt less isolated
- 82% feel more confident

Member's Story – Jim getting the support he needs

Widower Jim aged 83 lives alone. He lost his wife at the beginning of lockdown, his family live far away and are not able to visit very often. He was referred to us during lockdown via the social prescribing service due to his low mood, isolation and anxiety which was causing

insomnia and panic attacks. He was initially supported by our Fone Friends telephone befriending and was provided with craft activities to do at home. One of our caseworkers attended a GP appointment with him to advocate for his health needs and he was referred onto the local Older Adults Mental Health Team.

Once we were able to work in bubbles, we invited Jim to the centre for a coffee morning and introduced him to some of our members. As lockdown lifted, he began attending our Film Club, Lunch Club and outings. He quickly struck up a friendship with two other members and they now make arrangements to meet outside of KLS, go shopping and go on day trips organised by Community Transport.

Jim has continued attending lunch club and various activities, as well as Intermediate Exercise classes to ensure his physical mobility is maintained. He is looking forward to attending our day trip to Windsor soon. Jim continues to have mental health and memory issues. When he is struggling with his mental health, he contacts the team who provide one-to-one support. We have also referred him for Befriending and the Memory Clinic.



4. Core Programme

The service continues to offer Lunch Club, Exercise and social activities as part of its core programme, as well as outreach support for the most frail and housebound.

“Coming to KLS has been a lifesaver for me as after losing my job

I just stayed at home all day.”

Lorna, attends several social groups at KLS

5. Exercise

Exercise classes included Chair Exercise, Chair Dance, Dance for Life and T'ai Chi.

We piloted a new volunteer-led yoga class as our first evening session for our members.

Members attending these classes reported improvements in their fitness levels, balance and flexibility across all classes. This year we participated in Wandsworth Falls programme and held several falls clinics and falls prevention sessions at our centre.

Our **Annual Impact Survey** asks our members about their physical activity:

- 87% feel their levels of fitness has greatly improved since attending exercise classes.
- 82% report an improvement in balance, flexibility and strength.



Figure 1. Chair-based exercise in action

6. Lunch Club

Lunch Club was part funded by the Wandsworth VCS Warm Spaces Grant to help counter the cost-of-living crisis and ran on Tuesdays and Thursdays. This year we included themed meals such as a 1960s lunch buffet, Caribbean meals and an Italian Day. The menus are agreed with our members and the team cook healthy and fresh meals from scratch each day. We regularly get 50 people attending our Lunch Clubs each week.

"It gets me out of the 4 walls of my flat. The association with other people and the lovely meal. Nothing to improve. Unless we can get a Rolls Royce each! It's lovely".

Colin, a Lunch Club member



Figure 2. Healthy, home cooked meals served up at KLS

7. Social activities

Opportunities to socialise continue to be central to the Elders Service offer. This helps our members to widen their social network by making new friends and deepen relationships with existing ones. In turn reducing social isolation and increasing their social capital. We have a sewing club, Contact Club, hosted several themed parties including Christmas activities, film clubs, outings to see local shows, held talks and socials.

"I like doing art and dancing and painting. The best thing is to be here every day. I feel better. I am very happy."

Nora, an activities member

"I was very pleased when we all made poppies for Remembrance Day. They were displayed... [and] we sold some with money going to The British Legion."

Renatta, a Sewing Club member

8. Advice and Advocacy Support

The service also provides one-off and short-term support to more frail elders. In the past year examples of this have included referrals to foodbanks, referrals and advocacy for urgent housing needs, support to reduce debt and increase care packages as well as mental health service referrals.

We have a small team of 'fone friends' volunteers who continued to offer telephone friendship to our most vulnerable elders.

We also organise and chair the 'Battersea Elders Forum'. This regular Forum is a chance for stakeholders from local charities, Wandsworth Council and local care homes to meet and share ideas and activities planned for engaging older people in Battersea.

9. Age Well Battersea

"I feel much better when I am here."

Fatima, an Age Well member

As of March 2023, our Age Well service had 150 members, a 49% increase on 2021/22.

Again, due to an increase in referrals. Sessions have included: exercise via Zoom, LGBTQ+ Club, drawing classes/socials, photo-walking groups, storytelling classes, wellbeing sessions with Talk Wandsworth, reminiscence/educational activities including art therapy.

During this period activities have included a programme of 6 monthly local history walks, developed in partnership with Emma Anthony, Archivist at the Wandsworth Heritage Service. One walk was led by volunteer local historian Jeanne. One of our popular walks was a local history walk, talk and tour of Battersea Power Station. Fitness walks were aimed at those wishing to improve their fitness levels.

Once a month Age Well ran creative outreach sessions. The sessions were held at Battersea Arts Centre and 575 Wandsworth Road. This was to attract new membership, make use of community resources and increase confidence in members using public spaces unfamiliar to them.

The LGBTQ+ club had membership of 12. Activities (in chronological order) included

- Trip to Southend on Sea and Lunch (September 2022)
- Photography portraits project with UAL student (October 2022)

- Visit to Battersea Power Station (October 2022)
- Visit to Tonic Housing (LGBT Housing in Vauxhall) (November 2022)
- Covent Garden Christmas Stroll and Lunch (December 2022)

10. Age Well Art Shows

The Age Well Programme was proud to host two successful art shows in 2022:

- 'The Things That Matter in Life' in May 2022 at the Dyson Gallery
- 'Enjoy the Journey - How did we do that' in October 2022 at the Pump House Gallery

Both exhibited the amazing talent of the elders – none of whom had exhibited before, many of whom had not created art before.



Figure 3. The Things That Matter art show

'*The Things That Matter in Life*' exhibition showcased work created by participants during lockdown, as part of the Age of Creativity Festival. The art sessions were both in person and digitally online using Zoom.

'*Enjoy the Journey - How did we do that*' looked back at our members journey through lockdown and beyond. It included elements of storytelling, painting, drawing recordings and craft.



Figure 4. Enjoy the Journey art show

11. Tech Up Battersea



Our Tech Up Battersea service this year supported 127 elders to:

- **Access digital** – buying/borrowing/accessing the most appropriate digital devices, products and IT services.
- **Connect digital** – connecting to the internet and digital services, that is affordable and appropriate.
- **Acquire digital** – learning the digital skills and developing the confidence to lead a digital life.

“I have attended Tech Together for one year now. My skills and confidence in using my mobile phone have greatly improved, being part of a group also gives me the opportunity to discuss/ask questions regarding the different issues arising from the use of my mobile. The level and quality of teaching is excellent.”

Linda, a Tech Class member

Tech Beginners and Tech Up sessions are weekly sessions based on the foundation skills of the *Essential Digital Skills Framework*.

Topics covered included:

- Online Health - navigating the NHS website, with a fact-finding quiz; Introducing NHS app.
- Online Shopping - including a price challenge as part of ‘Get Online Week’.
- Banking Online - introduction and money management tools.
- Smart Phone Basics - understanding buttons, apps and types of connection. This was in response to feedback received following a ‘Back to Basics’ session.
- Understanding Apps - downloading and deleting.

Elders were referred to Age UK to loan a Tablet. 4 people were issued with data sims via the KLS project. Home visits were completed for 1-2-1 needs assessments and support sessions were provided.

Tech Up applied for 30 free smart phones to be shared across all teams in KLS. They come with 6 months free data and we await the result. We were granted 16 refurbished Android smart phones by Good Things Foundation, as part of their ‘Get Online’ London project with the Mayor of London and LOTI. <https://loti.london/projects/get-online-london>

We were awarded a grant for equipment via the Good Things Foundation capability.

Chris, our Tech Up worker, ran outreach sessions with local groups at: Dimson Lodge, Recycled Teenagers and Battersea Park Retirement Village. Each session was aimed at those completely new to technology.

We also partnered with Wandsworth Healthwatch, Wandsworth Council and Age UK Wandsworth on a Sight Loss event in March 2023 about digital skills and equipment. This

culminated in an event and report in November, which included the following quote on our services:

“We heard from Chris Andrew from Katherine Low Settlement, who talked about how everyone’s experiences and needs with technology are different. Chris runs two groups for people over 50 based on digital skills. One group focuses on catering for absolute beginners and the other is for people who have a bit more experience. Some of the people in Chris’s group have sensory impairments related to age. Chris has supported them with touchscreen skills and using audio description apps like Google Lens which reads printed text aloud. As well as the groups Chris offers one to ones to introduce individuals to the digital world. She shared the example of helping someone to find out more about BBC iPlayer, BBC Sounds and neighbourhood community apps like Nextdoor. Chris emphasised the importance of working together and sharing skills when building effective digital inclusion.”

Wandsworth Healthwatch sight loss and digital report 2023

<https://www.healthwatchwandsworth.co.uk/sightlossdigitaltech>



This year KLS handed over the Wandsworth Digital partnership to another local charity, Power to Connect, to lead on. We continued to attend the regular networking events, meeting colleagues from other digital projects. Feedback was received on some of the outreach work completed in the summer, the ongoing group and individual support offered.

Our worker also attended a national Digital Health Champion Network meet-up with colleagues running Digital Champion projects across the country. Their most recent report included us and shows that we have a comparatively good reach supporting people with digital skills.

Tech Up worked across some of KLS' other community programmes including delivering training for ESOL volunteers and staff on the use of 'Learn My Way', for new collaborative drop-in sessions or ESOL students and Elders.

Member's Story – Joanna learning how to use a smart phone

Joanna came to our Tech Up Battersea project very nervous about all the functions on her phone and with little experience of using other devices. She was often quiet in the sessions and not always ready to answer questions. With support and help from other her peers, staff and volunteers Joanna has progressed a great deal. She has shown a genuine enthusiasm for learning about technology and shows heartfelt gratitude after each session.

Recently she needed help with emailing her Housing Association as they were difficult to get hold of on the phone. The Digital Champion volunteers supported her with this in one of our drop-in sessions, as well as other practical tasks, making things a little bit easier for her to manage. Joanna's confidence has grown when using her phone and she has been getting steadily more used to using a tablet device in class. Unable to afford a computer of her own she has now received a refurbished tablet from our partnership with the Good Things Foundation Device Bank initiative.

"I am very grateful to Chris (our Tech worker) who has been very patient with me and helped me an awful lot when I needed it. I would say I am gaining more confidence now using my phone. I'm still learning with the tablet but I'm positive my confidence will grow. The volunteers at the digital drop-in have been invaluable when I need extra support. Thank you KLS, to the entire crew who have been so helpful and supportive."

12. Talking, Listening, Involving and Evolving with our members

Our members are always talking to us, letting us know what they want, what they like and what they don't enjoy. Members also vote with their feet, if they don't like it, they tell us. As a result, all of our programmes are full. We have waiting lists, such is the demand.

As well as informal feedback and participatory evaluations held throughout the year, once a year we conduct a formal Annual Impact Survey (results above). The information we collect is reviewed regularly in staff meetings so that everyone knows how our members are doing, how individual needs can be addressed.

Much more informally, we measure success based on our members' faces and in the multiple messages of thanks we get from them and their families. Recently, we lost a much-loved regular member. Our team attended her funeral, after which her family told us,

"We're really grateful for the lovely memories and support you gave Nan, and we know she loved coming so much. Every Thursday evening when I'd see or call her, she'd give me a rundown of how everyone was doing, and what the staff had been up to and what a nice lunch she'd had! She was always telling us about the other people she saw at the club at the children's group or people learning English and she thought that was very important too. So, we are very happy as a family to continue to support that work."

Eugenie: An Elders Team volunteer

"I was inspired to volunteer in the Elders team as I had retired from my job and had time to give back to the community. I love being around all sorts of different people and get so much out the experience myself.

I have been volunteering for five months, helping with the cooking for the lunch club and in the tech classes. I love seeing the members attending the lunch club enjoy the food I've helped cook, it's a wonderful club and I get to have so many interesting conversations. During the tech classes I teach members how to use their devices and while doing this I listen to their amazing stories.

I really enjoy being a friendly face and finding out more about each of the members I speak too. I think that's the key when volunteering as each person has their own story to share. I look forward to each volunteering activity I do!"

To volunteer with us please contact Chris Kelleher on chris@klsettlement.org.uk

There's more information on our website: [Volunteering - Katherine Low Settlement](#)

12. Plans for the Year Ahead

As the population continues to age, the cost-of-living crisis deepens and the squeeze on statutory services tightens, it is incumbent upon us to support more local older people with high quality community services, working in partnership with other local stakeholders – all in line with KLS new overall 5-year strategy.

We'd love for you to get involved. Please contact Sarah Goodall (below).

13. Get in touch

Want to know more about our Elders work, then please get in touch with:

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