**Community and Belonging Forum**

**Proposal for participatory research- isolation, loneliness, anxiety and depression**

1. **Context**

1.1 Since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic a range of local organisations, some supported through the BLSW11 Alliance Covid-19 Community Support Fund, have been developing extensive community outreach programmes. These have ranged from delivering food supplies; setting up support service via telephone, internet and other mediums of connection– to support some of the most vulnerable members of our communities.

* 1. Examples include (but are not limited to) Kambala Care, Waste-Not-Want-Not, JCT Management ltd, Age UK, Falcon Estate Residents Association; Battersea Covid-19 Mutual Aid; Coronavirus Angels, the Muslim Cultural and Education Centre; Sentalk; Ethelburga Community Residents Association – and many more.
  2. Notable local community organisations and churches have also mobilised volunteers in response to Covid-19 (KLS, St Peter’s, St Mary’s; Providence House, Carney’s Community, Caius House; Share).
  3. At the same time new networks have been established (Digital Exclusion, Community & Belonging) and established ones (Wandsworth Care Alliance; Wandsworth Older People’s Forum) have developed new ways of working (online).
  4. This extraordinary positive community response to Covid-19 has mobilised hundreds of new volunteers and created many examples of partnership working without systematic coordination and the sharing of locally collected data/intelligence.
  5. Through research and a series of Battersea Together events from 2016 to2019, Isolation, Loneliness and Poor Mental Health and Wellbeing (Anxiety & Depression) were identified as the three most pressing concerns of communities in Battersea. As such, tackling these issues is the main aim of the Community and Belonging Forum
  6. We already have an idea about the extent of these challenges but we currently lack details about specific factors driving these challenges and therefore solutions to overcome them.
  7. In 2019 BLSW11 Commissioned research into intergenerational activities in our area, which also explored the challenges of isolation and loneliness in broad terms.
  8. The CBF would like to work with various organisations to collect and analyse data and insights about these challenges, some of the specific factors driving them, and some solutions to overcome them.
  9. The results of this research would be used to inform and guide the development of future projects/programmes to address these issues.

1. **Approach**

2.1. The CBF will take a participatory approach to the research and will invite organisations working with Battersea communities to submit their interest in participating in the research.

The methodology of the research will be agreed in consultation with all organisations participating in the research.

The organisations participating will be supported to ensure that the research is underpinned by standard ethical principles and fully compliant with GDPR and safeguarding provisions.

All tools for data collection and analysis will be developed by CBF in consultation with the participating organisations and other relevant stakeholders.

1. **Funding**

3.1 It is proposed that the CBF and BLSW11 Alliance jointly fund the preparation, distribution, collection and analysis of Personal Statements.

* 1. Working with front line organisations CBF will pay £10 per qualifying Statement (qualifying means that the Statement is completed to an appropriate standard and is fully compliant with data protection).
  2. For the initial stages of the research a budget of £10,000 is suggested; this will allow for the collection and collation of 1000 PS’s.

1. **Management**

4.1 The ‘project’ will be managed by members of the CBF in partnership with the BLSW11 Alliance.

* 1. The PS database will be hosted by BLSW11
  2. Personal details will not be made public and only anonomised or aggregated information will be put into the public domain.

**Appendix – Social Capital**

The term social capital describes the characteristics of the relationships between people in communities.

Some areas are ‘rich’ in social capital with multiple forms of interaction between people through neighbourhood associations, clubs, community groups, trusts, charities and strong kinships; others are ‘poorer’, with few opportunities for people to come together with shared common purposes.

Communities with strong social capital are better placed to deal with threats and take advantage of opportunities than those where social capital is weak.

There are generally three types of social capital:

* Bonding – among family members, extended families and ethnic groups
* Bridging – across ethnic groups
* Linking – between different social classes

In terms of building a cohesive and inclusive community social capital can have positive or negative effects. Where people have shared values and strive to be inclusive, social capital can bring people together. Where people tend to be insular or exclusive, social capital can be a barrier, defending sectional interests.

Social capital can be measured in a variety of ways including (but not limited to):

* The number of community groups/associations in an area
* The types of associations (Trusts, Civic Groups, Ethnic Groups, Environmental Groups, Disability Groups, Sexual Orientation, Mental health)
* The range and types of infrastructure organisations that support groups and people
* Levels of volunteering

Social capital is essentially about how people interact and relate to each other.