

2022



LEWISHAM LOCAL'S ROLE AS VOLUNTEER PARTNER IN WE ARE LEWISHAM



**The Mayor of London
Borough of Culture**



**London Borough
of Culture 2022**

2022

LEWISHAM LOCAL'S ROLE AS VOLUNTEER PARTNER IN WE ARE LEWISHAM



**London Borough
of Culture 2022**



2022

**LEWISHAM
LOCAL'S ROLE
AS VOLUNTEER
PARTNER IN WE
ARE LEWISHAM**



**London Borough
of Culture 2022**



2022

LEWISHAM LOCAL'S ROLE AS VOLUNTEER PARTNER IN WE ARE LEWISHAM



**London Borough
of Culture 2022**



TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>3</u>	Introduction
<u>4</u>	Overview of Achievements
<u>5</u>	How We Engaged Lewisham Communities
<u>6</u>	Who Did We Hear From?
<u>7</u>	Barriers to Volunteering
<u>8</u>	Assemblies and Outreach
<u>10</u>	Case Studies
<u>14</u>	Survey Insights and Feedback
<u>16</u>	Recognition for Volunteers
<u>17</u>	Partnerships
<u>20</u>	Conclusion: Looking Forward

INTRODUCTION

Lewisham Local were the volunteering partner for the Mayor's London Borough of Culture in Lewisham 2022, to build a volunteering programme with an asset-based approach to volunteering.

DEFINING ASSET BASED

“Working with an asset-based approach is a core principle for Lewisham Local. The approach is embedded in our charitable objects and central to the design and delivery of our projects, such as our Time Banking work, connecting individuals to increase their wellbeing, developing an ecosystem of local organisations that are able to share their expertise to meet each other's needs.

To us, this meant looking at the resources (local people, community groups, businesses) that we have in Lewisham rather than the resources we lack and involving this ecosystem in our volunteering programme for our year as the Mayor's London Borough of Culture.

OVERVIEW OF ACHIEVEMENTS

473

Volunteers Signed Up

389

Volunteers Completing Opportunities

59

Volunteers Completing 215 Hours of 'Essentials Training'

28

International Volunteer Students Engaged

2,763

Volunteering Hours Completed



HOW WE ENGAGED LEWISHAM COMMUNITIES

We first engaged Lewisham's communities to volunteer for the London Borough of Culture by consulting our existing audiences. We successfully used our existing networks of community groups, volunteers and Lewisham Local Card businesses to build an initial audience of prospective volunteers in late 2021. We promoted an expression of interest form using our newsletters and social media. We saw 95 individuals sign up between November 9th 2021 and January 5th 2022. We were impressed by the high levels of interest prior to the year beginning. This saw a continuation of the high levels of engagement we saw from volunteers throughout 2020 and 2021 with the Covid Response Hub, the Afghanistan Crisis response and the Ukraine crisis appeal among other callouts.

FOCUS GROPS

To discover the motivations to volunteer and the challenges that might prevent volunteering we held eight focus groups with different demographics to inform how we engaged with Lewisham's residents throughout our year as volunteer partner.

We held focus groups with groups from Lewisham with different demographic backgrounds:

- Young Advisors from the Lewisham Young Mayor's programme: 15 young people aged 13-19,
- Lewisham Speaking Up – 10 Adults with learning disabilities
- Wildcat Wilderness – Outdoor gardening project that relies on volunteers – c10 adults between age 45-70
- Rushey Green Time Bank – 30 older adults, some having experienced social isolation, majority African-Caribbean

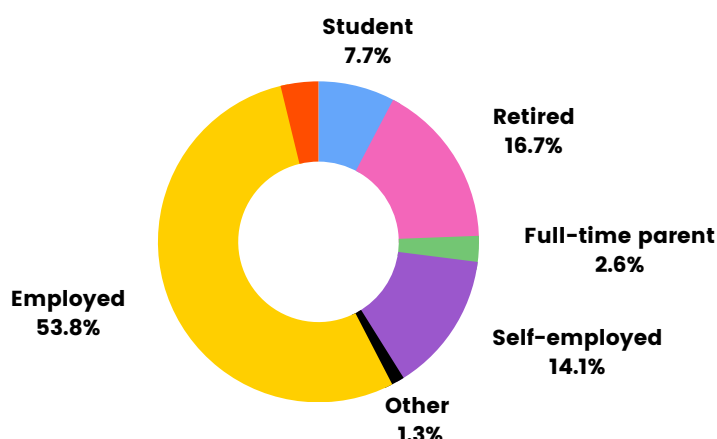
SURVEYS

In order to influence the volunteer programme for London Borough of Culture, we conducted a survey to discover motivations and barriers to participation in volunteering. The intention of the survey was to find out about attitudes and motivations for participation in the community across Lewisham, to see what we could harness to increase London Borough of Culture volunteering participation and identify any barriers to participation we could act on.

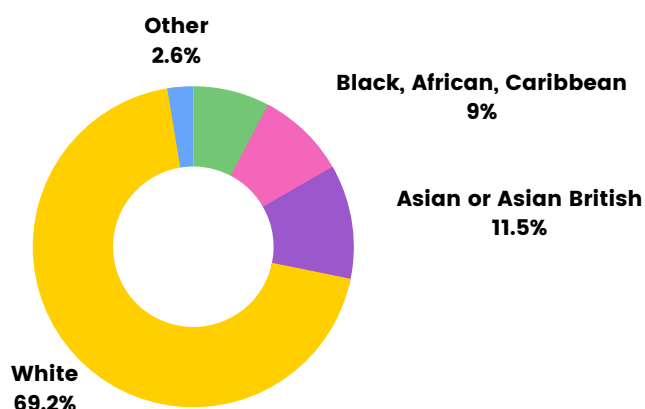
The survey results were collected during November and December 2021. The survey was sent to Lewisham Local's volunteers mailing list, and there were 81 respondents.

WHO DID WE HEAR FROM?

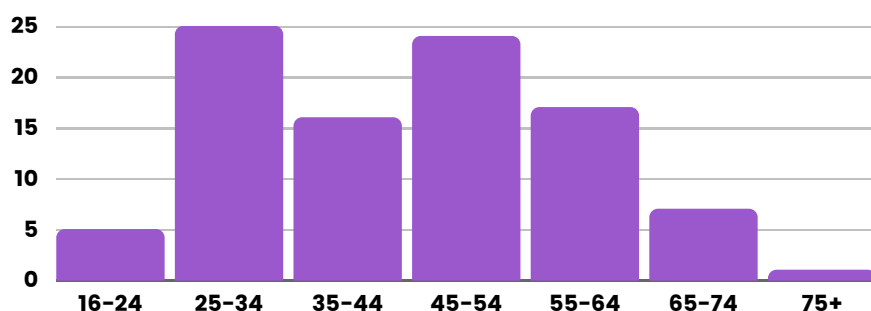
Respondents' employment status:



Ethnicity of respondents:



Respondents' age range distribution:



84%

Of respondents are volunteers or have volunteered in the past.

Analysis on motivations to volunteer

People and relationships was the most common reason given for why volunteering is worthwhile, whether it is the other volunteers, or recipients of the organisation.

43 respondents mentioned meeting people and building relationships. As illustrated by the two comments below:

“Love meeting the people of our community, people from all walks of life and backgrounds.”

“I enjoy befriending older people in isolation as they have so many stories of their past that they want to reminisce about and I love listening to their day to day life and encouraging them.”

BARRIERS TO VOLUNTEERING

On the topics of time, schedule and flexibility, 13 commented that they lack time to participate as much as they would like to. 3 mentioned that volunteer roles are temporary, or not at the right times/days. 5 commented that more flexibility around volunteers' work and schedules would be welcomed.

"It [volunteer work] is often of a fleeting nature as it is often temporary and/or hard to continue with due to other commitments"

"Volunteering needs to be flexible, as people have their own busy schedules but still want to get involved! Offering

"flexible sign ups would be great. Admin can be a barrier sometimes."

I find it difficult to participate in volunteering opportunities that require you to make a fix commitment to participating in advance as unfortunately this is doesn't fit well with my work and other commitments. I have also put off returning to activities where isn't not clear that the volunteers are really needed."

Full survey results can be found on this link:

<https://lewishamlocal1.sharepoint.com/:p:/s/LL-All-Staff/EWezi18G8WJKvFqRCiaiaHwBWkBsuHprxPAmKGu2rs1rPw?e=dTQsda>



SCHOOL ASSEMBLIES

Contacts with local schools emerged through a combination of the education partner, LEAN's education ambassadors as well as our network of local volunteers, friends and family members of our staff team.

We presented assemblies in five secondary schools/sixth forms across Lewisham: Bonus Pastor, Addey and Stanhope, Forest Hill, Deptford Green and Prendergast schools.

Our key aim for the assemblies was the recruitment of volunteers aged 16–18 for our Borough of Culture Explorer role. The role was promoted with the offer of:

- Volunteering for exciting projects and events whilst experiencing the culture our community has to offer during the year-long celebration
- Having the opportunity to attend Locals Exchange events, where you will learn more about the Lewisham community from Lewisham Locals, who will share their skills at these events
- Joining our own Locals Collaborate events to attend different events across the Lewisham Borough, hosted by Lewisham Locals

Through these assemblies we asked only that the young people showed:

- An appreciation of supporting local communities through volunteering
- An interest in learning new skills and knowledge, and developing current ones through a cultural exchange programme
- Ability to attend a training session to prepare you for your role
- Ideal commitment of at least 4 hours a week over a six week period

Our assemblies were successful in resulting in 15 sign ups to volunteer as Borough of Culture Explorers.

One key difficulty in motivating audience members to sign up was the lack of initial understanding about the full LBoC programme was and consequently we had to dedicate a large part of the time to explain what the programme was and what events there are.



LIBRARIES OUTREACH TO DIGITALLY EXCLUDED VOLUNTEERS

Through our focus groups we identified a need to inform local people about the volunteering programme and the wider LBoC programme who have limited or no access to the internet.

We responded to this by coordinating with Lewisham Library to setup a weekly digital drop-in to communicate information about the wider programme to people with limited internet access and recruit them to volunteer.

This photo shows one international exchange volunteer from Italy and one LL staff member advising a volunteer on signing up for the programme. These digital support sessions also represented an opportunity for our existing volunteers to recruit new people into the programme and share their experiences.



VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCES AND CASE STUDIES



CASE STUDY #1

ELKE OGESTRAT

The training session was adapted from the standard training offered throughout the year, to meet the needs of participants who required additional support.

Elke was referred to the LBoC volunteering programme through the Thriving Communities project and therefore received a tailored training session adjusted to her support needs. She spoke to us about her experiences volunteering at events through the year and leading her own jewellery making class as her Locals Exchange event:

Elke was happy with the bespoke 1:1 training session as she said that she sometimes asks more questions or wants a bit more detail and was worried about holding other people up in a group environment. The aim of the programme was to provide bespoke training to prepare participants to volunteer for London Borough of Culture.

The training session was adapted from the standard training offered throughout the year, to meet the needs of participants who required additional support. In this case, it was a 1:1 training session which enabled the participant to ask as many questions as needed, take breaks throughout the session and receive the 1:1 support to complete the training exercises.



CASE STUDY #2

YUYAN LIU

“Through the LBoC programme I’ve got to know so many people living around the area, it has given me an understanding of the culture as well. It has also given me an opportunity to meet more of my Goldsmiths University peers – I’ve made a really good friend through volunteering.

LBoC programme initiative involves so many different organisations in Lewisham, I feel like I’ve gained such a better understanding of the place where I live. I study arts administration and its taught me how to better manage an arts organisation through seeing all the groups involved.

I am a student and I would say there are not that many opportunities to meet people outside of Goldsmiths in general, I feel like volunteering bridged that gap and allowed me to meet local people and people from different age groups that I definitely would not have met otherwise. They’ve given me a different perspective.

Volunteering doesn’t only provide local community understanding but also advances my career opportunities, for example Goldsmith’s are looking for people to work for their ‘In Living Memory’ project and I would not have heard about this role or had the confidence to apply without the London Borough of Culture volunteering opportunities”



“I feel like I’ve gained such a better understanding of the place where I live [...] and met local people and people from different age groups [...] They’ve given me a different perspective.

FURTHER FEEDBACK FROM VOLUNTEERS

Feedback forms were sent to volunteers following completion of their volunteering opportunities. 80% strongly agree or agree that they enjoyed the volunteering opportunity they were involved in. Generally, those that neither agreed nor disagreed, did not feel useful enough during their volunteering due to event issues on the day and clarity on the role from a volunteering coordinator.

87% of volunteers would recommend volunteering for LBoC to other people.



“As there were not that many people there, I felt there wasn't enough to do and I didn't feel very useful. I enjoyed the talk though, and everyone was very friendly.” Creative Futures Industry Talk Volunteer

“It was great to be surrounded by people from different backgrounds who are willing to share about their experiences. My volunteering partners were there to encourage and help each other along the way. Our supervisors were very kind and clear.” Creative Futures Volunteer: Kickstart Your Career in Publishing, Writing and Poetry

“Good opportunity to meet other volunteers and take part in events throughout the borough of culture year.” Fun and Food in the Fields Volunteer



“Due to the nature of event it was difficult to ask the audience to give their feedback and thoughts on the event whilst it was happening. As such my duties were limited to putting up QR posters and leaflets around the event before it began.” Balamii x The Rivoli Ballroom Volunteer

END OF YEAR SURVEY INSIGHTS

Following the end of the programme, Lewisham Local surveyed everyone that had signed up to volunteer with Borough of Culture, the aim of the survey was to collect data on volunteers' experiences, monitor their expectations of the year against their experiences and highlight trends within these experiences. We have included a sample of comments from volunteers below:

"My volunteer training was very interesting and informative. I discovered new things about what volunteering is, what I can do and what my borough can offer in terms of activities and fun. All these in one to improve and unite the borough of Lewisham."

"To be honest what I enjoyed the most the LIT chorus at the end of the year. It was fantastic. The members of the chorus were great and the performance was something I won't forget. It something I will definitely try again."

"The thought that I have a great opportunity to contribute for my borough. To be part of something that I will feel proud and tell my kids one day" Lewisham Local, in answer to qs 2, 5 & 8

"At the Day one launch I volunteered at Downham Community Centre, where there was an embroidery workshop with Alice Burnhope. It was a really inclusive event and she was an amazing leader"

"The volunteering was lovely and really encouraged a sense of community. However, sometimes at the events it seemed people organising didn't really know what we were doing there" Borough of Culture Host, in answer to qs 5 & 14

"I have more time as I have dropped to part time work. The pandemic really helped me get to know my local area. I am really interested in the arts and keen to see more in Lewisham" Lewisham Local, in answer to q8

FEEDBACK FROM VOLUNTEER COORDINATORS

We also surveyed Volunteer Coordinators throughout the year to hear what their feedback was. Volunteer Coordinators were event producers as well as partner organisations and people who had attended our training.

"All our volunteers as part of Borough of Culture were absolutely brilliant. Whether performing or stewarding they helped us connect with our audiences and made the performances run really smoothly. They always brought passion and excitement to the project and the piece wouldn't have been the same without them there." – Mark, Teatro Vivo – Artists of Change: Performance Volunteers and Stewards (Opportunity Manager)

**"Not only did
the volunteer
attend, but
she was a life
saver!"**

The following opportunity was uploaded 2 days before the event on a Friday – the event was on Sunday. Two volunteers were needed, and we helped recruit one volunteer for the event despite the short turnaround:

"Not only did [the volunteer] attend, but she was a life saver. Made the event far more enjoyable for me. She was really helpful and react[ed] really well with the many participants." – Tim, Tomorrow is Built Today: Volunteer Invigilators (Opportunity Manager)

"My gratitude goes to Dee from Lewisham Local for supporting this body of work, and the generous volunteers (Hxxx, Axxx, Cxxx and Jxx) who joined our conversation and helped throughout the project." – Dima, Creative Conversations Workshop Artist

REWARD AND RECOGNITION FOR VOLUNTEERS

In order to incentivise and attract volunteers to not only sign up but stay with the LBoC programme throughout the year, we devised various reward and recognition ideas. This also served to fulfill our commitment to an asset-based approach to being a volunteer partner, approaching local businesses for prizes and local venues for meetups.

Volunteer Meetups x 2

- One was held in June which 12 volunteers attended. We had food and drinks, and 2 of our volunteers delivered an arts session where the group painted a London Borough of Culture banner. Sam also delivered a choir session. All the volunteers enjoyed the session and most of them stayed until the end.
- Another meetup was held in September where we had 9 volunteers attending. Again, we had food and drinks and on the night the volunteers said how nice it was to meet other volunteers. 2 of the volunteers fed back that they felt more comfortable to volunteer for LBoC now they had met some of the other volunteers and the LL team as they realised how friendly everyone was, which encouraged them to be more involved.

Training Sessions

- At the training sessions, snacks and a dietary considered sandwich lunch + dessert were provided. At the end of the session, volunteers were given an LBoC T-Shirt and chocolate. Volunteers have fed back that they had not expected the snacks and lunch and those with dietary requirements felt included, as this is not always the case. At the end of the sessions, volunteers were excited to receive their tshirts to become part of the LBoC volunteer community and take the chocolate home.

Monthly Competition

- Each month LL send out an LBoC Volunteers Newsletter with useful information about LBoC volunteering, featured events to volunteer for as well as all other upcoming LBoC volunteering opportunities. LL have partnered with local independent businesses to donate prizes towards a monthly competition. The competition asks a question about LBoC or Lewisham and trained Lewisham Locals and Explorers can enter the competition. Prizes have included a £30 voucher at Jerome's Wine Bar and Restaurant, a spice gift box from Babur's restaurant and a 1 year membership to Catford Mews. Winners are encouraged to collect the prize from PLACE/Ladywell where we take a picture and include it in the next volunteers' newsletter to celebrate their win.

PARTNERSHIPS : VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT THROUGH TWIN



Lewisham Local developed a relationship with TWIN English Centre who support students to gain experience in the UK to practice their English within the community. Prior to Brexit, students would be employed by businesses during their time here to gain experience in relation to their course of study however post-Brexit, ERASMUS no longer allows this and therefore, the alternative option for students is to volunteer in the community. This was an excellent opportunity to have reliable volunteers get involved in LBoC events for set periods of time as well as enabling the students to learn about Lewisham and experience London Borough of Culture whilst in the UK.

Students on this exchange would be available for anything from one week to one month. Once their days in London were agreed, students were assigned to LBoC volunteering opportunities. When they arrived in London, they would receive bespoke training from the Volunteering Programme Manager and Volunteering & Work Placement Coordinator at the TWIN offices.

Students verbally fed back that they were unlikely to have travelled to Lewisham had they not joined these opportunities and were likely to have stuck with the typical tourist offering of London (Big Ben, big museums etc). There was also excellent verbal feedback from one of the Danish school TWIN teachers (who had attended one of the training sessions). She was pleasantly surprised at the content of the training session and was pleased that it helped students think about London in a wider context as opposed to the main sights and locations that tourists usually visit.

At the beginning of the year, we were able to arrange for 8 Danish students to help an Event Producer at the Borough of Culture Unit in the Shopping Centre. This was an excellent opportunity for the producer to receive the help and a great start to the relationship with TWIN.

After this opportunity, we received another request to take on student volunteers over a two week period. This time for 16 students. The same Event Producer said they could take on the student volunteers for most of those days therefore this was secured with TWIN. To help with admin, the Volunteering Programme Manager set up the different opportunities on the portal and allocated the student volunteers to roles. Unfortunately, the producer was signed off sick a few days before the students were due to arrive therefore the LL put a call out to the other producers directly, and through Andy Thomas, to find out if their support could be utilised elsewhere. Neither LL nor Andy received a response from the producers therefore LL reallocated volunteers to opportunities with local community partners and also created roles for them to be involved in and managed each of these opportunities and volunteers.

LL emailed and spoke with Event Producers on several occasions earlier in the year to highlight the partnership with TWIN and to advise LL of a plan of events so that student volunteers could be secured around the most important events and those requiring large number of volunteers. The times we did receive a response we were informed that they could not foresee opportunities for volunteers therefore we had no choice but to decline volunteers from TWIN.



28

TWIN Volunteers Received Training

This consisted of 3 cohorts and 1 individual volunteer. These were:

08

Danish Students x 1 Week

Volunteered at the LBoC unit + a couple of other Lewisham Local projects.

16

Danish Students x 2 Weeks

Reallocated to community projects and Lewisham Local projects.

01

Italian Student x 1 Month

Volunteered in the Lewisham Local office supporting LBoC administration, other Lewisham Local projects and LBoC events. Most of the LBoC events were delivered by Event Producers.

03

German Students x 2 Weeks

Volunteered for LBoC events. Majority of these were events delivered by community organisations / charities.



CONCLUDING STATEMENTS AND LOOKING FORWARD

As volunteer partner we were able to bring together a diverse group of people to celebrate Lewisham by giving their time to our year as the Mayor of London's Borough of Culture, we are immensely proud of this.



Our legacy is a continued to desire to bring Lewisham's assets: its local people, community groups and businesses together through giving and exchange.

Our legacy as volunteer partner is visible in each new relationship that we facilitated during 2022.

Our legacy as volunteer partner is evident in the different kinds of people we brought together to celebrate, from those who lived in Lewisham for decades, to those who recently moved here to study or work to international exchange students whose first time in Lewisham came while volunteering.

We look forward to stronger partnership work in the future, to building on each link built within the last year and to these relationships solidifying in the following years.