

Building better lives through volunteering



Impact Report 2025 - 2026



Registered charity: 1048978

A message from our CEO

Anita Maullin
CEO, Volunteer Centre Sutton



As we reflect on 2025–26, I am incredibly proud of what we have achieved together across our communities in Sutton. This year has seen continued growth, innovation and impact across all areas of our work, driven by the dedication of our staff, volunteers, trustees and partners.

Guided by our vision, “Building better lives through volunteering,” we have continued to strengthen opportunities for people of all ages to connect and contribute. Through our youth, adult and community services, we have supported 3,483 residents facing isolation, inequality, poor wellbeing and support with other needs.

Volunteering remains at the heart of everything we do. 1703 volunteers generously gave their time, skills and compassion to support local people, strengthen communities and create lasting change through our brokerage work with partner organisations. This is one of our aims, connecting residents with meaningful volunteering opportunities across the wider charity, community and faith sector, supporting the Sutton Ecosystem. We developed and launched from partner feedback our Volunteer Hub, matching residents to organisations. This is going from strength to strength.

This report highlights the difference we have made together over the past year and the powerful impact that collective community action can achieve. My sincere thanks go to everyone who has supported, funded, partnered with and volunteered alongside us. Together, we are continuing to build stronger, healthier and more connected communities.

As a charity **Volunteer Centre Sutton** has a clear Vision, Mission, and Values.

Our Vision:

Building better lives through volunteering

Our Mission:

Harnessing the power of volunteering to strengthen communities and create positive change.

Our Values:

Inclusivity -
Ensuring volunteering is open to everyone!

Supporting Change -
Improving the community we live in!

Agility -
Responding to community need!



2025-2026: Our Year at a Glance

This year we connected with over

142

organisations working with volunteers



Our projects supported

3483

local people



We worked with

621

volunteers across all our projects



Our volunteers gave

42,902 hours



We processed

2138

volunteer role applications to organisations



Over

4,600

residents received our monthly volunteering opportunities newsletter



Volunteer Centre Sutton
60th Anniversary Event

June 2025



Sutton Befrienders
60th Anniversary Picnic

September 2025



MAPS Mentoring
30th Anniversary Event

October 2025



Youth Summit

November 2025

Supporting Volunteers and Organisations Working with Volunteers



2138

Residents referred to volunteer roles

33%

More organisations listing opportunities

257

Volunteer opportunities

86

1:1 volunteer advisor sessions

42

Organisations supported

“

We've seen a significant increase in positive responses to applications through the Hub. One of the biggest advantages is that we can respond immediately while people are still engaged. The speed of that first interaction is critical.

Natalie Mulcahy, Home-Start Sutton

Volunteer Centre Sutton acts as a trusted service, **supporting organisations to improve their infrastructure around volunteering**. This enables organisations to develop, strengthen and sustainably manage their volunteer programmes. We provide tailored advice and practical guidance to help groups and charities to recruit, match and retain volunteers effectively, ensuring volunteering opportunities are well-designed, inclusive and impactful. Alongside this, we facilitate networking to build a stronger local volunteering infrastructure. In partnership we commissioned a report 'Evolving Our Ecosystem', bringing out insights to inform the current situation for Charity, Community and Faith organisations. We developed a new Volunteer Hub—an online platform connecting residents with local opportunities, playing a key role in increasing engagement, generating enquiries to match to organisations. This has helped turn interest into meaningful community action.



Summarising the impact of our projects



MAPS Mentoring



Mentoring gave her time with a trusted adult that isn't linked to school or home to understand her ADHD diagnosis, improve mental health and confidence, build independence, and develop skills to manage friendships and challenges.

Parent of Mentee

26,640

Hours of
volunteer support

222

Young people
mentored weekly

81%

Improved mental
health & wellbeing

82%

Improved
resilience &
determination

89%

Improved
relationships
and leadership

MAPS Mentoring continues to provide vital early intervention and targeted support for children and young people facing significant challenges across Sutton. Through trusted mentoring relationships and the Elevate Peer Support for Mental Health pathway, the programme supports young people experiencing poor mental health, school avoidance, domestic abuse, social isolation, low confidence and other complex vulnerabilities. Working closely with schools, families, and partner agencies, MAPS helps young people build resilience, improve emotional wellbeing, increase engagement in education and develop positive coping strategies. The programme provides safe, consistent and personalised support, empowering disadvantaged young people to overcome barriers, strengthen confidence, and achieve more positive outcomes for their future.



MAPS Advocacy



“

From the beginning my Advocate was consistent and ensured i understood everything that was happening in my situation. She always made sure i understood the decisions and options that was given to me.”

M (Young Person)

487

Advocate hours

139

Young people supported

7

Specialist Volunteers

3

Volunteer Training Sessions

85%

Felt children's voices better heard

MAPS Advocacy provides independent, one-to-one support for children and young people navigating some of the most challenging periods of their lives. The service works with young people in local authority care, those leaving care, and individuals involved in child protection or complaints processes. Advocates ensure young people understand their rights, have their voices heard and are supported to participate confidently in decisions affecting their lives. Through trusted relationships and personalised support, MAPS Advocacy empowers vulnerable young people to navigate complex systems and achieve safer, fairer, and more positive outcomes for their future wellbeing and independence. MAPS Advocacy is proud to have achieved Advocacy QPM status. The QPM is awarded to organisations who can demonstrate that they provide excellent services in line with QPM standards and the advocacy charter.



Youth Participation



“

It was a great opportunity that allowed me to express my opinions. As a young person, I have never really seen or been provided with such opportunity. Thank you
Youth Board attendee

29
Young
Commissioners

366
Registrants for the
Youth Summit

4
Youth Board
Meetings

361
Unique individuals
supported

19
Young
Commissioner
Meetings

Sutton Youth Participation and Engagement empowers children and young people to influence decisions, services, and opportunities across the borough. Volunteer Centre Sutton's Young Commissioners programme works alongside partners to ensure youth voice directly informs the LSCP Children and Young People Delivery Plan and wider strategic priorities. Specific asks by young people have included improvements with Safety, Health and Inequalities. During 2025–26, we delivered a highly successful Youth Summit with partners including Police, Health, Local Authority and schools as well local organisations. We have active regular Youth Board meetings creating ongoing opportunities for discussion, leadership, participation and community change.



Sutton Befrienders



“

When you're old, you feel like you've been forgotten. Having them come back again and again meant I knew someone cared. It is not an exaggeration to say that Sutton Befrienders were a much-needed lifeline at an extremely depressing and emotionally traumatic time.
Sutton Befrienders Beneficiary

9072
Hours of
one to one contact

96
Adults receiving
weekly visits

121
Volunteers

100%
Feel
less isolated

86%
Feel more
socially connected

Sutton Befrienders supports some of the most isolated and vulnerable adults in the London Borough of Sutton, including people who are frail, living with complex health needs, bedbound and those with very limited or no informal support networks. Trained volunteer befrienders provide consistent, compassionate one-to-one contact through regular weekly home visits. This vital connection helps reduce loneliness, restore confidence, supports overcoming challenges and safeguarding concerns to create moments of joy and dignity in everyday life. The service not only improves emotional wellbeing and resilience for individuals who might otherwise be completely alone, but also builds meaningful, lasting relationships that strengthen community connection.



Adult Social Groups



“

**It's really good. You get to meet other people.
I look forward to it.**

Frank, Mens Group attendee

431

Adults
participating

239

Free sessions
delivered

5084

Hours of
social contact

21

Volunteer
supported activities

100%

Report a
positive impact

Sutton **Adult Group Activities** provide welcoming, inclusive spaces that help reduce isolation and build confidence, connection and wellbeing across the community. Our walking groups encourage gentle physical activity in supportive company, helping participants to stay active, improve mobility and enjoy nature while forming new friendships along the way. Music & Movement sessions use rhythm, song and light activity to boost mood, stimulate memory and support both physical and emotional wellbeing in a fun, accessible way. Our Men's Group and lunch clubs offers a vital space for connection, conversation and peer support, particularly for those who may otherwise struggle to socialise or share experiences. Together, these activities create regular, meaningful opportunities for people to belong, participate and thrive.



Community Health & Wellbeing



1459

Home visits

473

Meaningful
contacts

183

Household
supported

13.7%

Immunisations
increased

15.7%

Bowel screenings
increased

“

Residents described the role as “humans turning up on the doorstep”, highlighting its distinctiveness from transactional NHS models

Beneficiary

The Sutton **Community Health and Wellbeing Worker (CHWW) programme** commenced on the Benhill Estate in Central Sutton, as part of the wider South West London pilot. Inspired by Brazil's Family Health Strategy, it focused on reducing health inequalities, strengthening early intervention, and reconnecting residents who are least likely to engage with mainstream services. Starting with door-to-door outreach, the programme later expanded to targeted follow-up using GP data, reaching 10 blocks and 183 households. The model enabled trusted, consistent contact with individuals and families, helping to identify unmet needs earlier and support improved access to health and wellbeing services



Ukraine Support



“

“The Ukrainian Saturday School in Sutton is more than a place of learning – it’s a warm, supportive community where children and families feel connected and welcomed”

Ukrainian Parent

275

Unique individuals supported

125

Children and young people

23

Sessions for young people

40

Adults supported in group counselling

100

Adults supported in drop-in sessions

Support to the Ukrainian community provides a range of sessions, services and activities to adults and children who have settled in Sutton following the war, helping them rebuild their lives and feel a strong sense of belonging. Alongside practical integration support, the project delivers a Saturday school for children and young people, teen groups, and wellbeing-focused activities that strengthen mental health, resilience and confidence. Community sessions and activities create safe, joyful spaces for connection across generations. Day trips have included Deen City Farm, Brighton, Eastbourne and Wisley, alongside cultural celebrations and picnics that build inclusion, shared identity, reduced isolation and build a thriving, connected community.



Afghanistan Support



“We extend our heartfelt gratitude for your invaluable support in organising activities and events for the Afghan Community. A voice from the Afghan Community”

Afghan Beneficiary

140

Support sessions for Afghans

40

Afghans at our Easter event

2

Female support groups

66.67%

Males now in employment

100%

Females engaged in ESOL lessons

The **Afghanistan Support Project** provides culturally sensitive, tailored support to newly arrived Afghan residents in Sutton as they begin to rebuild their lives and settle into a new community. The service offers practical guidance, helping individuals and families navigate systems to integrate into the community with confidence. Alongside one-to-one support, group sessions create safe spaces for connection, shared learning and peer support. By combining practical assistance with trust-building and community integration, the project strengthens independence, reduces isolation, and supports smoother, more confident settlement for some of the borough's newest and most vulnerable residents.



Community Volunteer Squad



“

“I am so pleased with all the jobs the volunteer did for me! Now my house is improved my mind feels improved and that allows me to look after myself better”

Community Volunteer Squad Beneficiary

320

Tasks Completed

1202

Hours
volunteered

80

Trained
volunteers

589

Referrals from
partners

38

Partner
organisations

The **Community Volunteer Squad** connects trained local volunteers with Sutton residents who need practical, short-term support. The service responds to a wide range of one-off needs, including DIY, gardening, transport, and essential household tasks, often for people who are older, isolated, recently discharged from hospital, or facing temporary crisis. By stepping in at the right moment, volunteers help prevent small issues from escalating into bigger risks, while also reducing pressure on families and statutory services. The project strengthens community resilience, enabling people to remain in their own homes with dignity, while offering flexible, meaningful volunteering opportunities that turn local goodwill into direct, practical impact.

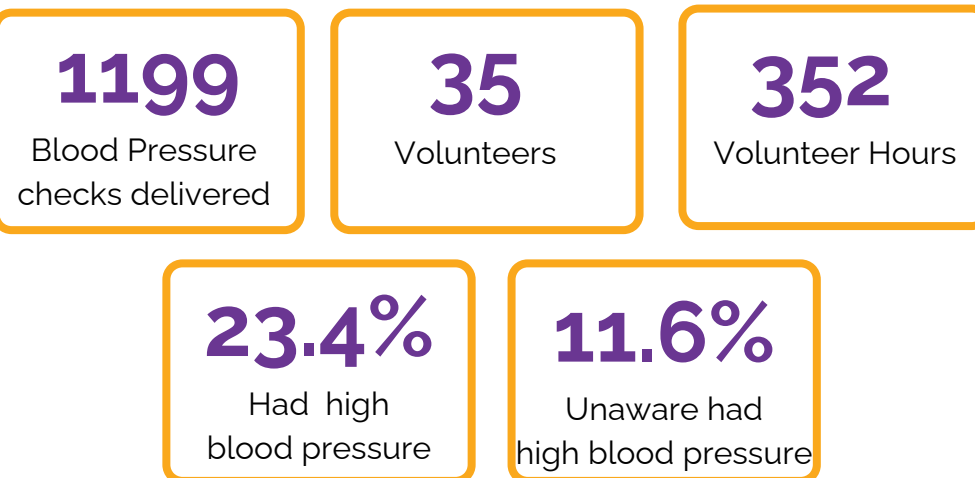


Health Navigators



Through these experiences, I strengthened my communication, empathy, teamwork, and IT skills, all of which prepared me for full time employment.

Health Navigator



The **Health Navigators** project supports residents to improve their health and wellbeing through trusted, community-based engagement. Volunteer Health Navigators provide free, accessible health checks including blood pressure monitoring, alongside residents receiving tailored, practical advice on lifestyle changes such as smoking cessation, cancer screening and signposting to further support where needed. By reaching people in community settings, the project helps identify health risks earlier, often before they escalate, and improves awareness among those who may not routinely access services. This proactive approach strengthens prevention, reduces inequalities, and empowers individuals to take small, achievable steps towards long-term healthier lives.

Benefits Form Filling



£1m

Benefits secured since project began

636

Hours provided helping residents

278

Sessions completed

78

Trained volunteers

71%

Application Success rate

“

I enjoy being able to help local residents who need support and who are often facing challenging and difficult times in their lives. It gives me a sense of purpose. I'm happy to put my skills to good use and feel like they are being utilised to help the local community

Benefits Form Filling Volunteer

The **Benefits Form Filling Project** provides one-to-one support for Sutton residents to complete complex applications including Personal Independence Payment (PIP), Universal Credit, Disability Living Allowance, Attendance Allowance, and other welfare-related forms. Delivered in partnership with Citizens Advice Sutton, trained volunteers offer practical guidance and reassurance to help residents complete complex benefit forms that they find daunting without support. By using skilled volunteers, the project is able to reach more vulnerable residents facing financial hardship, ill health, disability, or isolation. During 2025–26, the service helped secure significant financial support for residents, improving financial stability and wellbeing for those most in need.



Thank you to all our 2025-2026 funders and partners

Thank you to all the businesses and residents in Sutton who have donated, fundraised or supported us this year!



Community Action Sutton
Building Stronger Communities



SUPPORTED BY

MAYOR OF LONDON



Ethan, Trustee
Volunteer Centre Sutton



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Get in touch!

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