

Be Well Programme – Frequently Asked Questions

1. Why was the Be Well programme created?

Concerned about the increased mental health risks associated with loneliness, including depression and anxiety, South London Listens worked with community leaders to develop its flagship Be Well Programme in 2021. After listening to over 6000 people across South London in 2020 in a community listening exercise, this initiative was developed to ensure people were connected to each other and to the right services.

Be Well organisations are safe spaces located within community organisations for people to turn to when they feel their mental health is low. Be Well organisations perform three key functions:

1. **Build relationships** and provide a place for community members to talk to one another – developing activities and practices that seek to increase social connection, reduce social isolation, and improve wellbeing.
2. **Offer practical support** and signposting to members.
3. **Take action** with the wider community to act on structural and systemic inequalities and injustices that impact their mental health.

2. What are the benefits of becoming a Be Well organisation?

Be Well organisations help to de-stigmatise conversations about mental health and use community organising principles to build strong relationships. They help organise leaders to listen and take action on the barriers and systemic problems impacting people's mental health. A key part of the programme is also to offer wellbeing / social connection activities for your local community.

Be Well champions involved in the programme to date have highlighted that the training and support from the programme has increased their confidence and skills to support themselves and others in the community. Other benefits include:

- Development opportunities via access to free training, mentoring from both community organisers and mental health experts.
- An opportunity to engage in community organising and address important social and economic issues
- Raised profile in their borough and stronger social connectedness within and between communities
- Opportunities to link and network with other Be Well sites and NHS and LA place-based decision-makers

3. Do individuals need to be experienced mental health practitioners to be a part of the programme?

No, organisations involved vary and include community groups, faith groups, libraries, and schools. You may be working with people with specific needs e.g. physical health or neurodiversity and can still be involved in the programme as we know that social connection and wellbeing are vital for everyone and have an impact on health. This programme does not expect you to develop a mental health service but wants to support you with existing wellbeing activities you offer for your community (e.g. coffee mornings, lunch clubs, drop-ins, activity groups, services). Or you may choose to develop a new activity.

For people with more complex needs you can signpost them to local mental health and other relevant services. [South London Listens has resources that you can utilise to help guide signposting.](#)

4. Can we deliver our Be Well programme in partnership with another organisation?

Yes, we encourage collaboration! For example, another organisation could deliver a mental health/wellbeing activity at your site, or you could deliver it jointly.

5. What is different about the programme compared to other wellbeing programmes in my borough?

Many boroughs have a range of wellbeing programmes offered within communities. This programme offers on-going support, mentoring and networking opportunities for your organisation to build new skills and partnerships to support wellbeing for the community. In addition, the opportunity to build community organising skills can support local actions you would like to take to improve mental health services.

6. What is a Be Well mental health champion?

A Be Well champion is someone who has completed the mental health champion and community organising training and is committed to being involved in delivering a wellbeing activity within their organisation and challenging stigma.

7. What does the initial training cover?

<i>Mental Health champion – 1 day course (in person), or 2 virtual sessions</i>	<i>Community organising 4-hour course</i>
<p>Module 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The aims of the South London Listens Programme • Gaining an understanding of the mental health continuum and supporting wellbeing • The causes of stress, looking after your own wellbeing and working within boundaries. <p>Module 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building active compassionate listening practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is a Be Well organisation • Building a relational culture • How to listen effectively in your community

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying safeguarding concerns • Knowing when and how to signpost • Planning next steps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building your Be Well team
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8. How many people in your team need to complete the Be Well training?

At least two leaders must be trained to launch as a Be Well Organisation. Staff and volunteers can attend this training. The more people trained, the better!

9. Do staff with a mental health background or those who have completed similar mental health courses still need to do the training?

Yes, all Be Well champions need to complete the mental health champion and community organising training. The mental health champion training not only covers mental health and wellbeing but is also an important part of becoming part of the programme, understanding our aims, ethos, and building key relationships within the South London Listens and Citizens programme teams, and other organisations.

10. What support will I have from South London Listens?

Citizens UK Community Organiser	South London Listens NHS Project Team	Trainers and Practitioners at South London Listens NHS Project team
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support to develop your Be Well core team • Help to develop your Be Well initial and on-going Action Plans • Connections to other Be Well organisations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support to plan Be Well activities • Working in partnership with Citizens UK to trouble-shoot challenges related to Be Well activities • Guidance and signposting to other mental health services, trainings, and professionals based on the needs of your community • Connections to LA and NHS decision-makers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support to address issues of safeguarding • Support in working with people who may have complex needs • Advice/training on utilising trauma-informed approaches • Time limited mentoring support to support mental health and wellbeing practice in your project

We are also developing borough networks and project wide communities of practice which can provide you with on-going support, shared learning, training and partnership opportunities.

Please ask your community organiser about what is available in your borough.

In addition to support offered support via Borough networks we also offer time limited mentoring – (1-3 sessions) with our mental health trainer or the wider SLL / Citizens team if you extra support to implement mental health and wellbeing practice.

If you have any questions or need additional information on accessing mentoring and/or supervision support, you can also email be.well@citizensuk.org.

11. Do we need to develop a new wellbeing activity or build on existing ones we already deliver?

Some organisations choose to develop a new wellbeing activity, and we can put you in touch with members who have developed a range of activities.

Examples of Be Well activities include:

Art and wellbeing workshops, music groups, meditation groups, coffee mornings, support groups for new parents, bereavement and community cafes, quizzes for people with dementia, ESOL groups and wellbeing discussion groups which explore issues such as sleep, stress management etc.

For other organisations with limited capacity, embedding well-being related conversations or tools into existing activities can be a great way to get started.

12. What are the expectations of Be Well organisations?

Be Well organisations are expected to do the following:

- Complete the three components of the Be Well Champions training (at least 2 people from your organisation).
- Complete your [Be Well organisational Action Plan](#) with the support of your community organiser and send it to bewell.admin@citizensuk.org or post it FAO Haajera Adil, Jacquard Point, 1 and 3 Tapestry Way, London E1 2FJ.
- Have safeguarding policy procedures in place, reviewing them with your organisation's internal safeguarding lead. [You can also reach out to your borough's safeguarding board for advice/training if needed or to report a safeguarding issue.] . **(For more information refer to point 17).**
- Commit to undertaking the necessary responsibilities of making your organisation a Be Well organisation for a minimum of one year.

- Participate in Be Well gatherings and ongoing support and development activities.
- At least annually, make any updates you need to your organisation's Action Plan and meet with your CUK organiser and members of the South London Listens project team to discuss any needs that your Be Well organisation has so we can better support you.
- We may also, from time to time, ask you to participate in evaluation activities so we can continue to improve and make a case for why the Be Well programme is necessary across South London communities.

If you would like a more in-depth look at the Be Well journey you can access this in page 10 of our [Be Well Brochure](#)

13. How will Be Well sites be involved in community organising?

Sites will have the opportunity to network with other Be Well organisations and get involved in campaigns for South London Listens.

Through the last round of cross South London borough listening that took place (in the summer and autumn of 2023), communities have set priority campaigns to reduce structural and systemic inequalities and injustices that impact mental health.

All Be Well organisations can participate and take action across our health organising campaigns, which include:

1. Work, wages, and cost of living
2. Housing
3. Migration and race
4. Mental health and social isolation
5. Children, young people, and parents

However, if you would like to get involved in wider national Citizens campaigns beyond mental health, you may be interested in becoming a member of Citizens. You can [learn more here](#).

14. How do you brand Be Well site

[The toolkit](#) includes both Be Well and South London Listens logos. We encourage sites to put the Be Well logo up on the wall in your wellbeing space. It can also be used on leaflets, posters and other signage. We also have a Be Well Champion email signature that you are welcome to use.

15. What information will I need to provide on my activity.

All Be Well sites will need to provide the number of activities offered each quarter and an estimate number of attendees.

We would also encourage you to think about how you will get feedback from people accessing and delivering your Be Well activity over time to help you continue to

develop your offer. We can help you in thinking this through if helpful. It may be as simple as completing a listening exercise, getting quotes from people in your community, using a video testimony of people's experience, or a confidential survey.

Once a year we will also ask all sites to give us feedback on the programme and help us continue to improve our offer.

16. Is there any funding available to help in the delivery?

South London Listens can reimburse you for all reasonable out of pocket expenses needed to deliver your activities e.g. venue costs, stationary, food or drink, training etc.

Please discuss with your local organiser before incurring any expenses.

We ask that all Be Well organisations fill out this form and send it to be.well@citizensuk.org to be reimbursed. This roughly takes 2 weeks to be approved by our Finance department.

17. What about safeguarding?

Implementing your Be Well Programme will require you to ensure you have clear safeguarding systems in place.

Safeguarding adults/children is everybody's business, and all staff/volunteers have a responsibility to prevent abuse and act quickly when they have concerns.

NHS England defines safeguarding as:

"Living a life that is free from harm and abuse is a fundamental human right and an essential requirement for health and wellbeing. Safeguarding of adults is about the safety and wellbeing of all patients, but providing additional measures for those least able to protect themselves from abuse."

Types of abuse include:

1. Physical abuse
2. Domestic violence or abuse
3. Sexual abuse
4. Psychological or emotional abuse
5. Financial or material abuse
6. Modern slavery
7. Discriminatory abuse
8. Organizational or institutional abuse
9. Neglect or acts of omission
10. Self-neglect

To learn more about safeguarding and the different types of abuse please review this website [here](#).

When establishing your Well Being Programme please ensure that you:

- Speak to your organisation’s Safeguarding Lead, who will assist you in understanding your organisation’s safeguarding policies and procedures and how they apply to your Be Well activity.
- Ensure that all your staff are fully trained in your safeguarding approach and know what they need to do if they have any concerns around taking action and recording relevant information.
- Many organisations have a poster in the room they offer wellbeing activities which summarises internal and external contact details to enable Be Well teams to report concerns via internal safeguarding leads, and external bodies where relevant.
- If you don’t have a Safeguarding Lead, contact your Borough safe-guarding team who can provide advice around putting policies in place, but also in responding to issues that arise (see details below).
- If your team does report a safeguarding issue make sure they are supported to access support to debrief and prioritize their own wellbeing.
- If needed you can access South London Listens mental health mentoring to debrief and explore issues that may come up.

You can access the Borough Safeguarding board for your borough via the website below. They can offer advice in establishing safeguarding practices, access to training and how to report safeguarding issues outside of your organisation where needed.

Local Safeguarding board – for advice, training and reporting where required.	https://www.anncrafttrust.org/resources/find-your-nearest-safeguarding-adults-board/ Each London borough has a safeguarding board.
Police emergency if you believe you are in immediate danger	999
Police for non-emergency	111
Action on elder abuse	0808 808 8141
NSPCC	0808 800 5000
National Domestic Abuse Helpline	0808 2000 247
Samaritans	116 123

18. *Sign-posting practice*

Be well organisations are not intended to provide in depth 1:1 counselling or mental health support. Where more in-depth help is required to improve health

and wellbeing, or participants raise other issues eg debt or housing, it will be essential to signpost to other services.

Sign-posting in most instances requires the individual to take responsibility for accessing another service once they have been given contact details, rather than your organisation taking partial or full responsibility for making a referral to another organisation. However, a more proactive referral may be required occasionally, for example where there is a safeguarding issue.

Signposting resources offered by South London Listens

Most of our Be Well boroughs already have a standard sign-posting form which covers core mental health and emergency services in your borough, and we are developing new ones for some boroughs.

We have also developed a summary of other helplines and websites that can be useful.

Please ensure your Be Well team are familiar with both summaries, and also gather information about local services. The more you familiarise yourself with local services the more effective you can be in helping people access them. This can include local leaflets and summaries of Be Well sites being made available during the wellbeing activity.

[South London Listens has resources that you can utilise to help guide signposting.](#)

If you would like more support around this issue please email be.well@citizensuk.org