

# Southwark Life

Winter 2020

## COVID-19 update

Get the latest on restrictions and support

## No one left behind

Meet the new Leader of the Council

## Driving ambition

We speak to George, a Peckham resident now working for Formula One

## Christmas is coming

All the info you need for Christmas and winter



 **NATIONAL COVID ALERT** **STAY HOME** **5 NOV – 2 DEC** Find the latest guidance and exemptions at [gov.uk/coronavirus](https://gov.uk/coronavirus) **STAY ALERT CONTROL THE VIRUS SAVE LIVES** **NHS**

Your magazine from Southwark Council

*Southwark*  
Council  
[southwark.gov.uk](https://southwark.gov.uk)

# ‘JUST THE FLU?’



## Who can have the flu vaccine?

The flu vaccine is given to people who:

- are 65 and over (including those who'll be 65 by 31 March 2021)
- have certain health conditions
- are pregnant
- are in a long-stay residential care
- receive a carer's allowance, or are the main carer for an older or disabled person who may be at risk if you get sick
- live with someone who's at high risk from coronavirus (on the NHS shielded patient list)
- frontline health or social care workers

## JUST GET YOUR FREE FLU JAB

Ask your pharmacist or GP if you're eligible.

Flu  
vaccine

help us  
help you

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## welcome...

It is an honour to be elected as Leader of Southwark Council. As Leader, I want to work with everyone in Southwark to keep building a better future and unlocking the amazing potential I see in every part of our community.

Never has that potential been clearer than during this pandemic. Seeing volunteers, frontline workers, public services, charities, faith groups and businesses all step up together has been truly inspiring.

Sadly the pandemic is far from over and following a sharp rise in cases and hospital admissions, England has gone back into tighter restrictions. Our continued response to COVID-19 remains our top priority.

Although COVID-19 is the most pressing and urgent issue we face, it is not our only challenge. The unequal impact of the pandemic on different communities has shone a light on wider inequalities and injustice in our society. My ambition as Leader is to unite communities in Southwark so we can break down that inequality, and not just rebuild from the crisis, but build something better. A Southwark where everyone has a home, where everyone can get a decent job, where we end our carbon emissions and where everyone is empowered to make the best of their life.

This edition of Southwark Life includes current information about COVID-19 restrictions as well as updates on our climate emergency work and new homes building programme, the awe-inspiring story of a local young entrepreneur and so much more.

Cllr Kieron Williams  
Leader of Southwark Council



### Contact us

Do you have something to say about Southwark Life? Write to: Your letters, Southwark Life, Fourth Floor North, Southwark Council, 160 Tooley Street London, SE1 2QH or email [southwark.life@southwark.gov.uk](mailto:southwark.life@southwark.gov.uk)

Our front cover star is Peckham-born George Imafidon (see interview on page 22).

### The Southwark Life team

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**Design** Whatever Design Ltd  
**Print** brokered by Swiss Post  
**Printed on 100% recycled paper**  
**Distribution** London Letterbox  
 Content is correct at time of going to print and assumes the national restrictions will be lifted on 2 December as planned.

### Keep in touch

Southwark Life comes out three times a year and the next issue is due out in spring 2021. You can contact the magazine at [southwark.life@southwark.gov.uk](mailto:southwark.life@southwark.gov.uk) but for more regular updates on council news and events, follow us on social media at

- [facebook.com/southwarkcouncil](https://facebook.com/southwarkcouncil)
- [@lb\\_southwark](https://twitter.com/lb_southwark)
- [Instagram.com/southwarkcouncil](https://Instagram.com/southwarkcouncil)

# Need to know...

It's been a very challenging few months and the COVID-19 pandemic remains in the headlines across the country – but in Southwark there is plenty more still going on. Read on to find out more.

For news and events follow us on social media or find out more at [southwark.gov.uk/news](https://www.southwark.gov.uk/news)

 Follow us on Facebook [facebook.com/southwarkcouncil](https://facebook.com/southwarkcouncil)

 Follow us on Twitter [@lb\\_southwark](https://twitter.com/lb_southwark)

 Follow us on Instagram [Instagram.com/southwarkcouncil](https://Instagram.com/southwarkcouncil)

## ULEZ is expanding into Southwark – have you checked your vehicle?

From Monday 25 October 2021, the central London Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) is expanding as part of the campaign to clean up London's air, and will cover parts of Southwark.

The ULEZ operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, including weekends (except Christmas day), with a £12.50 daily charge for vehicles that do not meet the required emissions standards.

Cars, motorcycles, vans and other specialist vehicles (up to and including 3.5 tonnes) and minibuses (up to and including 5 tonnes) will need to meet the required ULEZ emissions standards when driving within and into the expanded zone, or pay a daily charge.

Four out of five cars already meet the ULEZ emissions standards, but we need owners of the remaining older cars, motorcycles, lighter van and minibuses to take action.

Check your vehicle meets the ULEZ emissions standards and the interactive map of the zone. Visit [tfl.gov.uk/ulez-2021](https://tfl.gov.uk/ulez-2021)

## Voting safely at next year's elections

The Greater London Authority elections are due to take place on Thursday 6 May 2021 and we are already making plans to help you stay safe while casting your vote. You will still be able to vote in person at your polling station but you may like to consider voting by post.

Please apply now to ensure you receive your postal vote with plenty of time to complete it and return it to us at the election. Visit <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apply-for-a-postal-vote> to find out more.

If you have recently moved house you should also apply to register for your new address online at [www.gov.uk/register-to-vote](https://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote)

## Congratulations to our very own MBE foster carer

We are delighted to announce that Southwark foster carer Gloria received an MBE, in the Queen's Birthday Honours list, for an outstanding service to the community.

Her social worker said 'Gloria has been a foster carer for Southwark Council for 27 years. Gloria's ability to love children and young people unconditionally really creates that turning point in their lives, when they begin to feel accepted for who they are, which has such a positive impact on their self-esteem.'

One of her messages of support also came from a young person whom she fostered: 'A saying that I have taken through to my adulthood that Gloria would always stress was "to always remain happy and positive no matter what life throws at you".'

Are you the sort of person that can remain positive and help a young person going through challenging times? Why not consider fostering? Contact [fostering@southwark.gov.uk](mailto:fostering@southwark.gov.uk) or call **0800 952 0707**. Find out more at [www.southwark.gov.uk/fostering](https://www.southwark.gov.uk/fostering)

## Contact your councillors

We know that in these difficult times people still need the support of their local representatives, but to keep residents and councillors safe, the ward surgeries were closed. We are currently looking at how we can restart these safely, including in a virtual format, and we will keep you up to date through our councillor web pages at [www.southwark.gov.uk/mycouncillor](https://www.southwark.gov.uk/mycouncillor)

In the meantime if you need to get in touch with your ward councillor, please use phone or email. The list of contact details can be found on the same link.

# Helping people find work in Southwark



Southwark Works is a free employment service, funded by the council, for local job seekers and employers. It provides friendly and expert-led support for Southwark residents of all ages and backgrounds, creating better work opportunities in our community. If you are looking for a job, they assign you a personal adviser and offer help throughout each stage of your career. Whether that's finding your first job or your next role, advice on your CV, interview preparation, or delivering on-the-job guidance.

Southwark Works has helped thousands of residents achieve better hours, pay and career prospects since 2005. Its qualified advisers offer video and phone appointments and have extended their online career advice and resources. You may be able to meet an adviser at the Walworth Road office. But you must ring first for an appointment due to COVID-19 restrictions.

If you are a job seeker or an employer wanting to advertise roles or employ an apprentice, find out more at [southwarkworks.com](http://southwarkworks.com). If you aren't online call **Freephone 0800 052 0540** for more information.

## What to do if you smell a rat...?

If you saw Channel Four's Council House Britain, then you've seen our pest control officer Andy in action (pictured). If you live in the borough as a council tenant, rent privately or own your own home we offer a variety of pest treatments. We can help with a wide range of pests including rats, mice, bedbugs, flies, wasps, cockroaches, birds and squirrels.

Costs can vary depending on whether you get benefits or live in council housing. You can now book, pay for and reschedule pest control appointments online. If you aren't online, you can call our Contact Centre on **020 7525 2000** Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm to book an appointment. If you have a live rat in your home, you can get an emergency appointment by calling that number. We also provide pest control services to businesses. Find out more at [southwark.gov.uk/pest-control](http://southwark.gov.uk/pest-control)



## Help for domestic or sexual abuse



Southwark Council has increased support services funding for people experiencing domestic and sexual abuse. The early 2020 lockdown increased the risk of people experiencing abuse.

From April to June 2020 our domestic abuse service, Solace, had a 25% increase in referrals compared to the same period in 2019. These were largely people at high risk, which increased by 115% with 204 referrals compared to 95 last year.

Domestic abuse isn't just about violence. It can be physical, sexual, emotional or financial abuse. It

can be from someone you live with – your child, a carer, a relative, a current or ex partner. It can include neglect, controlling behaviour, forced marriage, 'honour based' violence or female genital mutilation.

Often abuse is about control. Controlling and coercive behaviour is a criminal offence, which could mean an abuser going to prison. Domestic abuse can happen to anyone. If you're 16 or older, of any gender, and need help then contact Solace for confidential help and advice on **020 7593 1290** or email [southwark@solacewomensaid.org](mailto:southwark@solacewomensaid.org).

Find out more about domestic abuse and getting help on our website at [southwark.gov.uk/domesticabusehelp](http://southwark.gov.uk/domesticabusehelp)

## Message from the Borough Commander for the London Fire Brigade, Phil Morton

"Smoking is still a leading cause of fatal fires and generally makes up a third of all fatal fires in London. There have been a number of fires in Southwark in recent months as a result of smoking. Common causes of smoking-related fires are people falling asleep while smoking or discarding cigarette butts or matches that have not been properly extinguished.

"The people who die in smoking-related fires are often the most vulnerable who live alone, including the elderly, those with mobility problems, illnesses, drink or drug dependencies. Family members, carers and neighbours of those who smoke are also urged to look for early warning signs that someone could be at risk of having a fire related to smoking and ensure that they have working smoke alarms fitted, especially in rooms where they smoke. Burn marks on carpets, furniture, clothing and bedding are often the first obvious signs that someone could be at risk of a smoking related fire.

"We would urge anyone in contact with smokers who notice these tell-tale signs or has any concerns to request a Home Fire Safety Visit from London Fire Brigade and visit our website for practical advice on how to reduce fire risk."

# COVID update

COVID-19 numbers have been rising rapidly across the country and on 5 November, England moved into a new month-long period of national lockdown.

**W**e need to act now to protect the NHS and to help save lives and livelihoods. We know many residents are worried about the financial impact of another lockdown on their families while others will fear loneliness and isolation. The council will do everything it can to support all residents through this challenging time.

## The current COVID-19 rules

On Thursday 5 November, England moved into a new month-long period of national restrictions, until Wednesday 2 December.

While this is hard for everyone, it is vital we stick to the rules to reduce the number of people who are catching the virus, and stop it spreading to our most vulnerable residents.

This means that we should all stay at home as much as we can, to save lives and reduce pressure on the NHS.

## The key rules

You should only leave your home for specific purposes. These include to:

- **Exercise outdoors** or visit an outdoor public place
- **Attend medical appointments** including a booked COVID-19 test
- **Avoid harm or injury** (such as domestic abuse)
- **Attend school**, education or childcare
- **Go to work if you cannot work from home**
- **Shop for basic necessities** like food and medicine
- **Visit members of your support bubble, care for vulnerable people or volunteer.** You should limit social contact to people you live with, and those in your support bubble. You can meet one other person outside for outdoor exercise/visits to public places.

Many businesses, such as pubs, non-essential shops, cinemas, leisure centres, museums and hair and beauty salons are closed.

Full details of the restrictions can be found at [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)

If you are able to, please do sign up for our enewsletter ([www.southwark.gov.uk/followus](http://www.southwark.gov.uk/followus)) to make sure you have all the latest information.

\*All information correct at time of going to print

## Impact of the new national restrictions on Southwark Council services

- **All sports and leisure facilities**, including football, tennis and basketball courts, grass and astro-turf pitches, outdoor gyms, cricket nets and fishing areas are closed.
- **Schools** remain open and children should attend as normal.
- **Leisure centres** are closed
- **Libraries** are closed (but digital services and the home library will continue)
- **Playgrounds** will stay open but families should maintain social distance and wash hands/use hand sanitiser before and after use.
- **Waste and recycling** – services will continue as normal and we continue to offer bookable slots at the waste and recycling centre
- **Housing repairs** – to reduce the risk to residents and staff of home visits, we will only be carrying out essential repairs inside people's homes, focusing on ensuring homes are warm, dry and safe, and prioritising vulnerable residents.
- **Housing solutions** – The Government guidance states that lettings should continue, and all Housing Solutions services should remain available to comply with the statutory legislation.
- **Resident services** – We will continue to contact and support vulnerable residents, and carry out estate inspections, and Fire Risk Assessments. Meetings with residents and routine home visits will be carried out virtually where possible.
- **Registrars** – As an essential public service, register offices will remain open, birth registrations, corrections and notice appointments can continue to be offered. Death registrations continue by phone. Citizenship ceremonies continue virtually. Weddings and civil partnership ceremonies are not permitted except in exceptional circumstances. (These weddings are limited to 6 people.)

## Where can I get help?

If you are worried about the impact of the new restrictions or about self-isolating, there is support available. Whether you are worried about how you will get essential items like groceries, your mental health or loneliness, or how the restrictions will affect your finances – the council can help. Our Community Hub is still available to offer advice and support.

Visit [www.southwark.gov.uk/covidsupport](http://www.southwark.gov.uk/covidsupport) for more information or contact the Community Hub at [covidsupport@southwark.gov.uk](mailto:covidsupport@southwark.gov.uk) or call 020 7525 5000.

## When should I self-isolate?

Self-isolate (stay at home) immediately if:

- **you have any symptoms of coronavirus:** a high temperature, a new, continuous cough or a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste
- **you've tested positive for coronavirus** – this means you have coronavirus
- **you live with someone who has symptoms or tested positive**
- **someone in your support bubble has symptoms or tested positive**
- **you're told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace** or the NHS COVID-19 app
- **you arrive in the UK** from a country with a high coronavirus risk

If you don't self-isolate when you're required to, you could be fined.

## When should I get a test?

You should book a free test for one of the following reasons:

- you have any symptoms of coronavirus: a high temperature, a new, continuous cough or a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste
- you're getting a test for someone you live with who has symptoms
- your local council asks you to get a test
- you're taking part in a government pilot project

If you're getting a test because you have symptoms you need to do so in the first 8 days of having symptoms.

To book a test visit [www.nhs.uk/coronavirus](http://www.nhs.uk/coronavirus) or call 119 (from 7am to 11pm).

## How to stop the spread of coronavirus

The virus hasn't gone away and the best ways to stop its spread have not changed. Don't forget to:



Keep your distance from other people as much as possible



Wash your hands regularly for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer



Wear a face covering when required to do so (including on transport and in shops).

## Could you be a Health Ambassador?

Southwark Council, supported by Community Southwark, has launched a Community Health Ambassadors Network to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 and empower and support Southwark residents to stay up to date with the latest and most accurate advice.

Ambassadors help their family, friends and wider community make sense of the latest advice and information to help ensure we all stay safe. You will also play an important role in ensuring your community's voice is heard and reducing health inequalities by telling us about the barriers and difficulties your specific community is facing, which will help us better respond to vulnerable communities.

You will receive specialist COVID-19 training and can opt to join webinars and Whatsapp groups for the chance to meet others and work together.

If you are a voluntary sector worker, a passionate volunteer, a local resident or employee wanting to make a difference during this difficult time, then please get in touch and help us prevent the spread of COVID-19. Further information is available at [www.communitysouthwark.org/news/we-are-launching-our-community-health-champions-programme](http://www.communitysouthwark.org/news/we-are-launching-our-community-health-champions-programme).



# No one left behind

Cllr Kieron Williams took on the role of Leader of Southwark Council in September. We spoke to him to discuss what he hopes the future will hold.



## What got you into local politics in Southwark?

I've always worked to improve people's lives. For a long time I did that in charities, the NHS and government. But when my kids were born I wanted to use all I'd learned to give back to my community. I've always felt politics matters, that comes from my parents. Standing as a Labour councillor brought it all together as the best way I could help my community.

I've been a councillor for six years now and I can't imagine anything more rewarding. I've had the privilege of working with brilliant people who are improving their estate, setting up youth groups, starting businesses, campaigning for clean air, supporting older people and so much more. As well as incredibly dedicated staff across our NHS, police, council and schools. I'm endlessly inspired by them, and how much we can achieve together.

## Your predecessor, Cllr John, was Leader for a decade. What does it feel like to step into his shoes, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic?

It's daunting! When you put together the combination of COVID, ongoing government cuts and a no-deal trade agreement with the EU looming – this is without question the most difficult year in a lifetime. However, our community's response fills me with hope.

I spent the spring working with Southwark's voluntary sector and NHS to get support to people during the first lockdown. Together we achieved in days things that would normally take years. As Leader I've been inundated by people wanting to continue to work together in that way. It's been both inspiring and humbling and I want to say thank you to everyone for their continued support.

I also want to say thank you to Peter. Over the last decade the Government has cut the council's funding by half. Yet Peter ensured Southwark council didn't just survive but improved. With new and better council homes, parks, libraries, schools, leisure centres, cultural institutions and so much more. Improving the lives of thousands of

people along the way. That's a legacy I'll continue to build on.

## What are your main priorities over the next months and years?

COVID-19 has been the thing I've had to focus on first. Since I took over as Leader we've rolled out local contact tracing of people who have tested positive, taking the number of people contacted up to 85% in Southwark, much higher than the national scheme. That's just one example, we will keep doing everything we can to stop the virus and support our community and businesses through the pandemic.

Beyond COVID my first priority will always be ensuring we have prosperity in Southwark and that it is shared. Far too many people are struggling to get by. I want to work with everyone in our borough to tackle poverty and inequality, making Southwark a fairer place where everyone has the chance to have a good life.

What does this mean? Well it means everyone should have a decent home they can afford. That's why we'll be building more council homes and making sure private developers build homes local people can afford too, as well as taking action to ensure people living in the private rented sector get a fairer deal.

It means helping people to get a job. With the council helping 5,000 people into work by 2022, including a new campaign for young people to make sure they have employment opportunities during this difficult time.

It means working to end carbon emissions by 2030 and to clean up our toxic air. Planting 10,000 trees, decarbonising buildings, and turning

over more of our streets to zero carbon, zero pollution uses including walking and cycling.

Finally I want people to have a real pride in their neighbourhoods. Southwark is its neighbourhoods; they are all fantastic places to live, work and visit and I want Southwark to be known as one of the best places to live in the country.

## What do you think Southwark should be most proud of?

We've got so much to celebrate it's hard to choose. Great parks and libraries. World leading hospitals, universities, theatres and galleries. An incredible range of businesses, from traditional bakers to cutting edge tech companies. However, for me this pandemic has shown that the thing that underpins it all is the strength of our community. We have an incredible network of community and faith groups. From friends of parks, to tenants and residents associations, to befriending groups, to community sports. As a council we spend over £22 million a year supporting local voluntary and community groups, but I know that's just the tip of the iceberg of the extra money they raise, as well as the hundreds of thousands of hours Southwark residents volunteer every year.

I also have to mention our council homes. Living as we do at the heart of one of the world's most expensive cities, it is our council homes that make Southwark affordable for so many people. That we have a higher proportion of council homes than any other borough in the country is one of our greatest strengths. I'm delighted to say we have hundreds more being built today, with thousands more to come.

### Favourite place in Southwark?

Burgess Park. It is a real people's park. Full of people from every part of our community fishing, BMXing, barbecuing, taking a stroll, playing football or just feeding the ducks. My cycle through it on the way to the office always leaves me smiling.

### Favourite cultural thing about Southwark?

The food! You can experience almost every culture on the planet in a restaurant or café somewhere in Southwark.



# A different view

The challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic have given the council a new opportunity to step back, reflect and refresh its priorities for the future.

**I**n 2018 the council published our four-year plan for Southwark, setting out our priorities for the borough and promises to residents. Now, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has had a huge impact on the borough, we are refreshing the plan and seeing where things need to be done differently.

Good progress has been made on many of the original commitments from 2018 and despite the big challenges facing the borough because of COVID, we are still ambitious for the future. The council is committed to making our borough more fair and just, and tackling the inequalities which still affect too many people in our communities. We're also continuing to deliver on our ambitions to build more homes, invest in local services and open up opportunities for residents across the borough.

We've asked residents what they think of our plans and we will be looking at all the responses to our public consultation before the final plan is published. We will also be continuing to engage and consult with residents, community groups and partners as we deliver our commitments over the next two years.

## What has changed?

**COVID-19:** Responding to the pandemic, including supporting residents affected and rebuilding the local economy, is the council's biggest priority for the coming months and years. We will continue working with the NHS, partners and local communities to stop the spread of COVID and support local people through this very difficult time.

**Inequality:** The pandemic has shone a light on wider inequalities in our society, and shown how far we still need to go before we live in a world that values every life equally. We are committed to tackling racism, inequality and injustice in Southwark and the new plan sets out the steps we are taking to create a more equal and just borough.

**Climate emergency:** We've set out ambitious plans to make Southwark carbon neutral by 2030 and we're putting the environment at the heart of everything we do as a council. We're planning to make our buildings greener, create more space for walking and cycling and planting thousands more trees, to make our borough greener and protect Southwark's future.

You can read more about our plans on the council's website:  
[www.southwark.gov.uk/councilplan](http://www.southwark.gov.uk/councilplan)

# Your new Cabinet

In September the new Leader of Southwark Council, Cllr Kieron Williams (see interview on Page 8), appointed his Cabinet to lead the work of the council, from tackling climate change to the housing crisis. As part of a cabinet, which reflects Southwark’s ethnically diverse community, seven of the new cabinet portfolios are also now led by women, making the cabinet a majority female team. This makes Southwark the borough with the highest percentage of women in its cabinet, in London.



**Cllr Jasmine Ali**  
Deputy Leader and Children,  
Young People & Schools

Jasmine deputises for the Leader of the Council and is responsible for all the borough’s local authority schools, youth services and children’s care, including our work to ensure 100% of young people with mental health conditions get help.



**Cllr Rebecca Lury**  
Finance & Resources

Rebecca manages the council’s budget and business planning, leading our work to keep council tax low by delivering value for money across all our high quality services.



**Cllr Evelyn Akoto**  
Public Health & Community Safety

Evelyn leads the council’s public health work in partnership with the NHS, including responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. She also is responsible for tackling anti-social behaviour and violence against women and girls - working with the police to deliver a safer Southwark.



**Cllr Alice Macdonald**  
Communities & Equalities

Alice is responsible for strengthening our relationships with the voluntary and community sector, supporting volunteering across the borough. She leads the council’s work to tackle inequality and ensure that fairness and justice are the cornerstone of all the decisions we make.



**Cllr Stephanie Cryan**  
Jobs, Culture & Skills

Stephanie will work to rebuild and renew Southwark’s local economy, including restoring employment levels threatened by the pandemic, support for local businesses, and supporting young people into work, paid internships, education and training.



**Cllr Leo Pollak**  
Housing

Leo is responsible for our ambition to build 11,000 new council homes and managing our council homes, including repairs. He leads on estate renewal programmes that benefit communities and give local residents the tools they need to improve their estates.



**Cllr Helen Dennis**  
Social Support & Homelessness

Helen is responsible for services for older people and those with disabilities. She also leads on our work to deliver the Southwark Community Support Alliance, building on the success of the Community Hub, set up to support residents through the pandemic and lockdown. She leads on the council’s work on homelessness and supported housing, working to end rough sleeping.



**Cllr Catherine Rose**  
Leisure, Environment & Roads

Catherine leads the council’s work to promote leisure and sport in the borough and increase the quality of the borough’s parks and green spaces. She is responsible for ensuring Southwark’s streets are clean and increasing the number of people who walk or cycle. Catherine also leads on increasing recycling and reducing waste to landfill and improving air quality, particularly around schools.



**Cllr Johnson Situ**  
Climate Emergency, Planning & Transport

Johnson leads our work on tackling the Climate Emergency, continuing to improve the borough’s environment and our contribution to a greener city and a greener planet. He is responsible for development plans for the borough which deliver new homes, jobs and infrastructure that benefit local communities, and leads on our consultation and engagement with the community around planning and strategic development, ensuring that their views shape every aspect of our work.

# Is your child starting primary school in September 2021?

Apply for a school place online before the deadline. It's quick, easy to do and available 24 hours a day.

## Dear parents and carers

Starting primary school is a huge milestone for you and your child, and I am proud that here in Southwark we have a range of high quality schools for you to choose from.

Please remember to apply before the closing date, and to pick six schools on your application to increase the chances of your child being offered a school of their preference.

When applying online, our website has lots of useful information about the different types of schools in Southwark, as well as tips to help you decide which school is right for your child.

I wish you and your child the very best.

**Councillor Jasmine Ali**  
Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member  
for Children, Young People & Schools,  
Southwark Council



Starting primary  
school in Southwark  
2021/22

Applications close 15 January 2021  
Apply online at [www.southwark.gov.uk/schooladmissions](http://www.southwark.gov.uk/schooladmissions)



@lb\_southwark facebook.com/southwarkcouncil

Applications close  
**15 January**  
**2021**

For more information and to apply for your child's school place visit [www.southwark.gov.uk/schooladmissions](http://www.southwark.gov.uk/schooladmissions) or call 020 7525 5337

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Council  
[southwark.gov.uk](http://southwark.gov.uk)



# Finding our 'Hidden' Homes

WE'RE BUILDING 11,000 NEW COUNCIL HOMES ACROSS SOUTHWARK

Almost 680 new council homes have been built in Southwark since 2012, providing hundreds of families with a new home.

One of these residents is Olamide Oni, who moved into a brand new two-bedroom council flat in May 2020 with her four-year-old daughter. Before this, Olamide and her daughter had been living in temporary accommodation in Lewisham for three years while waiting for a permanent home.

Olamide said, "I was so excited to move into this flat. Living here, I'm closer to friends and family and I have childcare – life is just easier. I actually have time to have a social life again and get my support network back.

"The flat itself is beautiful, I feel so lucky to know that it's all brand new and I'm the first person to use everything. There's more space for my daughter and she's now living closer to her dad as well so there's definitely been a positive impact on her life".

Olamide is one of many residents to benefit from the council's ambitious New Homes programme, which is building 11,000 new council homes across the borough by 2043.

The council currently has over 10,000 households on its council house waiting list. Like Olamide, many residents are living in temporary accommodation for long periods while waiting for a permanent home.

Olamide said, "The place I was living in Lewisham was fine, but it was old and quite run down. It was difficult for my family to get to, so I was quite isolated there. I wasn't allowed to decorate so it never felt like a proper home. I've definitely noticed an improvement in my lifestyle and mind-set since I've moved.

"Home to me means a place where I feel safe and comfortable – somewhere that I can personalise to reflect my style. Having a home is so

important for your mental health. I've decorated my flat so it's exactly how I like it – I've bought a brand new bed and beautiful plants!"

The council is using innovative methods to build new council homes wherever possible. Dawes House, in Walworth, is one of Southwark's 'Hidden Homes' developments, where new flats are built in disused spaces in existing estates.

This block of flats where Olamide and her daughter live were originally unused drying rooms on the estate. The council converted the old drying rooms into five new council flats.

The council is on track to meet its target of building 2,500 of its 11,000 council homes by May 2022. Every one of these units is a new home for our residents, and has the potential to transform the lives of those who move into it. We'll keep building to make sure that all our residents have a home they can be proud of, now and in the future.



# Don't be lonely this Christmas

If you're experiencing feelings of loneliness, support is available.

**C**hristmas can be a lonely and difficult time for people for a range of reasons, being far from family and friends, the recent loss of a loved one, or even unresolved family disagreements. You do not have to suffer alone and help is available.

This year presents even more of a challenge with the impact of COVID-19 making it harder for family and friends to come together.

Within Southwark, we have a range of local services dedicated to providing support to older people. Traditionally, this support has included community Christmas lunches, delivery of hampers and face-to-face befriending services that help older people thrive and connect with their community. Befriending services offer support from a trained volunteer or carer who visits you in your home on a weekly or fortnightly basis to help with small tasks like tidying, de-cluttering, and shopping. But it can also just be to have a cup of tea and chat.

While COVID-19 might have put a restriction on some face-to-face activities, you will still be able to receive support and speak to someone to ease any feelings of loneliness and anxiety.

## WHERE CAN I FIND SUPPORT?

**Consortium of Older People's Services in Southwark (COPSINS)** was launched in 2012 to support older people in Southwark to access high quality services to support their independence and promote their wellbeing. Here are some of the services they work with:

**Link Age Southwark** offers a free befriending service to everyone aged over 60 and those with dementia who live in Southwark. To make a referral you can download a referral form at [www.linkagesouthwark.org/befriending](http://www.linkagesouthwark.org/befriending) and return it by email to [info@linkagesouthwark.org](mailto:info@linkagesouthwark.org). If you would like to receive a copy of the form in the post, please call the service on 020 8299 2623.

**Blackfriars Settlement** offers a free befriending service. To make a referral contact Tina Johnston or Eileen Dacey on 020 7928 9521 or e-mail [tina.johnston@blackfriars-settlement.org.uk](mailto:tina.johnston@blackfriars-settlement.org.uk) or [eileen.dacey@blackfriars-settlement.org.uk](mailto:eileen.dacey@blackfriars-settlement.org.uk)

**Southwark Carers Southwark Churches Care Befriending Services** is the leading specialist organisation providing befriending services for older people in the community in central and north Southwark with over 100 volunteers. For further details, please contact [scc-office@btconnect.com](mailto:scc-office@btconnect.com) or call on 020 7708 4497.

**Southwark Pensioners Centre** has services and activities for people over 50. To find out more, visit [www.southwarkpensioners.org.uk](http://www.southwarkpensioners.org.uk) or call 020 7708 4556.

**Time & Talents** offer a weekly emergency relief food distribution hub, befriending service, and free online activities. For more information on befriending call 020 7232 5669 or email [referrals@timeandtalents.org.uk](mailto:referrals@timeandtalents.org.uk) or [info@timeandtalents.org.uk](mailto:info@timeandtalents.org.uk)

**The Samaritans** also have a helpline, 116 123, which is free to call from mobiles and landlines.

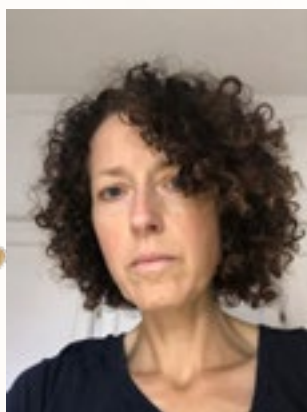
## *Stella Omoniyi, Befriender, Time & Talents Service*

"Volunteering gives me a sense of purpose and fulfilment. However, lockdown made face-to-face activities impossible. Thankfully, I have been able to continue to provide support over the phone. I understand just how speaking to someone during these circumstances and in general can mean so much to them and so much more to me."



## *María, Befriender, Blackfriars Settlement*

"I volunteer as a 'telephone befriender' with the Blackfriars Settlement and have done so since shortly after the start of lockdown. It has been a joy and a huge privilege to get to know two of the older ladies in the Settlement's community. I would recommend this service to anyone who might be in need of a friendly ear or looking for a worthwhile task in these uncertain times".



## *Dieter, Befriender, Link Age Southwark*

"I've known Penny for two years now and there is never a shortage of things to talk about, and the list of small jobs never seems to run out. Taking her downstairs to the communal garden for a cup of tea (according to Penny the highlight of her week) brings back fond memories of my own parents in the final years of their lives and reminds me of the importance of staying connected with real people, ideally every day."



According to Age UK, more than 2 million people in England over the age of 75 live alone, and more than a million older people say they go for over a month without speaking to a friend, neighbour or family member.





**TAKECARE** SOUTHWARK

# Get help making healthy choices

Get free support on how to move more, achieve a healthy weight, improve your mental wellbeing, reduce your risk of Type 2 diabetes, quit smoking and more.

Visit [southwark.gov.uk/takecare](https://southwark.gov.uk/takecare)  
or call **0333 005 0159**

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# LET'S GET DIGITAL

Buying presents online and video calling to keep in touch with loved ones this Christmas has never been more important, due to COVID restrictions.

**A**lmost 1 in 5 of us in the UK need a bit of extra help to do that – because we've not been able to learn how to send an email or search the web. Southwark Council is working hard to change that for our residents – including through a variety of digital skills courses for beginners while giving residents access to fast, reliable Wi-Fi in community halls and libraries.

But sometimes, what we really need is a friendly face in the community to help us along, what can feel like, quite a daunting journey.

So we've asked a company called We Are Digital to create a network of volunteer Digital Champions – to help fellow residents build the confidence and skills to take advantage of the world online.

The network is funded by internet company Hyperoptic – who are helping to improve broadband speeds across Southwark by installing full-fibre broadband networks, particularly in areas with the lowest internet speeds.

Find more on our Better Broadband pages:  
[www.southwark.gov.uk/housing/housing-getting-involved/better-broadband-for-southwark](http://www.southwark.gov.uk/housing/housing-getting-involved/better-broadband-for-southwark)  
 Or call **03333 444 019** (option 1) to sign up for some 1-2-1 digital skills support from We Are Digital.

## Become a volunteer Digital Champion

You don't need to be an IT whizz, you just need a bit of spare time and enthusiasm to support others. Typical tasks for a Digital Champion include:

- Teaching someone to use Google
- Helping someone set up an email account
- Explaining how easy shopping and banking online can be
- Setting someone up on Skype
- Helping someone research their family history or other hobby online

In return you'll receive free online training to develop your own digital skills and knowledge, certificates and badges to add to your CV and ideas and support from a huge network of Digital Champions. You'll also get a great feeling of personal satisfaction knowing you've made a real difference to others. To find out more, call We Are Digital on **03333 444 019** or visit [www.digitalchampionsnetwork.com](http://www.digitalchampionsnetwork.com).

# Christmas is coming!

Christmas might look a little different this year but the council will still be here to make sure you have a safe and happy Christmas, New Year and winter

## Peckham Pantry

This year has thrown up a number of challenges for our residents and many families are feeling the pinch. Over the lockdown the use of local food banks has increased.

Peckham Pantry is launching their food pantry, at Peckham Park Road, to enable the local community to shop for wholesome, nutritious and good quality food, at a fraction of the usual price.

With a fixed price of £4.50, enabling families to shop for items with a value of at least £15, Peckham Pantry will reduce shopping bills, whilst enabling choice from our wide range of healthy produce to stock cupboards, fridges or fruit bowls.



## Shop Local

Saturday 5 December is Small Business Saturday where people can support their local small businesses and shops online or in person if restrictions allow.

SMALL BUSINESS  
**SATURDAY**  
5<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER

This year, more than ever, our local small businesses need your support. Southwark Council has been working hard to support our local businesses and we have given out over £2million in grants and loans. This Christmas residents can do their bit to support local businesses – and here are the top five reasons why you should:

1. By spending money in their local shop, restaurant, café or pub – if restrictions allow it – shoppers can do their bit to aid our national recovery across the country.
2. Helping to grow the number of jobs in our local areas makes for a better place to live and work, which then creates a healthy economy for the community.
3. Independent retailers often reward regular customers, while others often provide great deals that can't be found in major outlets – meaning people save money as they spend.
4. Local businesses also generate revenue to support council services such as libraries, parks and roads that benefit communities.
5. Local shops often source their goods locally, helping to reduce their carbon footprint. When shopping local, people are also more likely to walk or cycle to get there – doing their bit to reduce air pollution, reduce traffic and improve the quality of the nation's high streets.

# Getting gritty

The council's Highways team will still be out and about as the weather gets colder to carry out our essential winter maintenance service. They will be out salting the roads, usually in the middle of the night, ensuring that people can still drive on the main roads, emergency services can still reach everyone and access the hospitals, and that essential deliveries can be made to shops and businesses.

The team runs a 24-hour service, 7 days a week, that started on 1 October and will continue right through until April next year. As well as salting the roads they will be ensuring that our network of over 200 salt bins across the borough are filled and ready for use by residents. When heavy ice is forecast, our most used pavements around schools and shops, and other key areas such as stairs and bin areas in our housing

estates, are gritted by our Cleansing teams.

Last year, we also trialled salting our main east-west cycle route (see photo). This was carried out by our Cleansing team spraying a liquid de-icer to the route to ensure that the route was free from ice. The treatments were very successful and a great example of how council departments can work together for a common goal and keep the main cycle ways clear and usable. We will be doing this again this year and looking to add to the number of routes that we can treat.



For further information, see our web page at [www.southwark.gov.uk/street-care/gritting](http://www.southwark.gov.uk/street-care/gritting), that contains details of how we carry out our service and links to maps to see what routes will be kept clear of ice as far as practicable.

## No smoke without fire

To help reduce pollution and the environmental and health problems caused by the London smog in the 1950s, the whole of Southwark was designated a Smoke Control Area many years ago. This means you can't burn solid fuels such as wood and coal unless you have a specially approved appliance (e.g. a stove or a burner on the governments approved list)

This means that it is illegal in Southwark to:

- Burn anything other than smokeless fuel in an open fireplace
- Use an appliance that has not been government approved for use in Smoke Control Areas
- Burn the wrong fuel in an approved appliance
- Cause visible smoke from your chimney or flue

If you need to burn solid fuel to heat your home, carefully choosing what you burn and how you burn it makes a big difference to the level of pollution it creates. Remember, any stove or fireplace should be properly maintained and your chimney should be regularly swept.

For more information go to [smokecontrol.defra.gov.uk/fuels](http://smokecontrol.defra.gov.uk/fuels) and [smokecontrol.defra.gov.uk/appliances](http://smokecontrol.defra.gov.uk/appliances)

## Go green for Christmas

With the Climate Emergency (see page 24 for more on the council's commitment to tackling the Climate Emergency) a key priority for a lot of residents, Christmas can be a challenging time. So here are some tips about recycling over the festive period and advice on how to enjoy a more environmentally friendly Christmas in 2020.



- Avoid glitter and foil on cards and paper, because these can't be recycled.
- Cut back on over-packaged gifts, especially those with plastic film and polystyrene.
- Be sure to re-gift, sell or donate any unwanted clothes and tech after Christmas, as we can't recycle these if you put them in your household waste.
- Make sure your recycling is reasonably clean and dry and squash and flatten items to make space in your bin or bag.
- You can have a tree delivered to your home, where you can decorate and care for it over the Christmas period. Then, when the festivities are over and you've seen in 2020, you can have your tree collected, replanted and allowed to carry on living. This company delivers to all SE addresses: [londonchristmastreentrental.com](http://londonchristmastreentrental.com)



Meet one of the standout stars of the recent Council House Britain programme on Channel 4.

**C**ouncil House Britain, Channel 4's well received six-part documentary, has put Southwark in the limelight. The series highlights the complexity of housing and homelessness and the vital work of dedicated council workers from Housing and Pest Control.

Charmain, a Resident Services Officer who supports 600 residents, told us about her time filming for the prime time TV series.

### **What did you most enjoy about taking part in the series?**

I've most enjoyed seeing residents relish the opportunity to take part in the programme and have a voice. It has been a unique experience. I think it is wonderful that Britain will be able to see that Peckham, for example, is not how the public see the area. Viewers will be able to see regular people who are proud of where they live. Peckham and

other parts of Southwark are not 'no go' areas, but places where families can thrive and be proud of their community.

### **What was it like being on the show?**

I found it interesting being on the show and learning about what goes into creating a programme and how content is filmed. I did not realise when you see programmes on television that show someone going into a house, followed by a clip of them inside the property closing the door, that this is sometimes achieved with one camera rather than two, and involves a lot of editing. Who knew?

### **Why did you take part in the Council House Britain documentary series?**

I decided to take part in the programme to educate Britain and some of our colleagues about what Resident Services Officers do. You'd be surprised at what people actually think our job entails. People think

it's all about evicting tenants, but we support our residents in countless ways and their welfare is important to us.

### **Are there any weird or funny filming moments that stick out?**

One memory that sticks out is when we were wrapping up filming and getting ready to walk back to Queens Road, but heard my tenant shouting from the second floor of his block. When we looked up he was entering his flat from the window, and he was shouting to me that he had lost his key for the umpteenth time. I thought the camera man had stopped filming, but the camera was still rolling. Then I was told that this is the opening shot for the series. Just another day in the life of a Resident Services Officer.

If you missed the series, you can stream all the episodes on [www.channel4.com/programmes/council-house-britain](http://www.channel4.com/programmes/council-house-britain)



What do Southwark foster carers look like?



Like you, like us...



Southwark foster carers living in Southwark can claim 100% council tax relief [southwark.gov.uk/council-tax-relief](https://www.southwark.gov.uk/council-tax-relief)

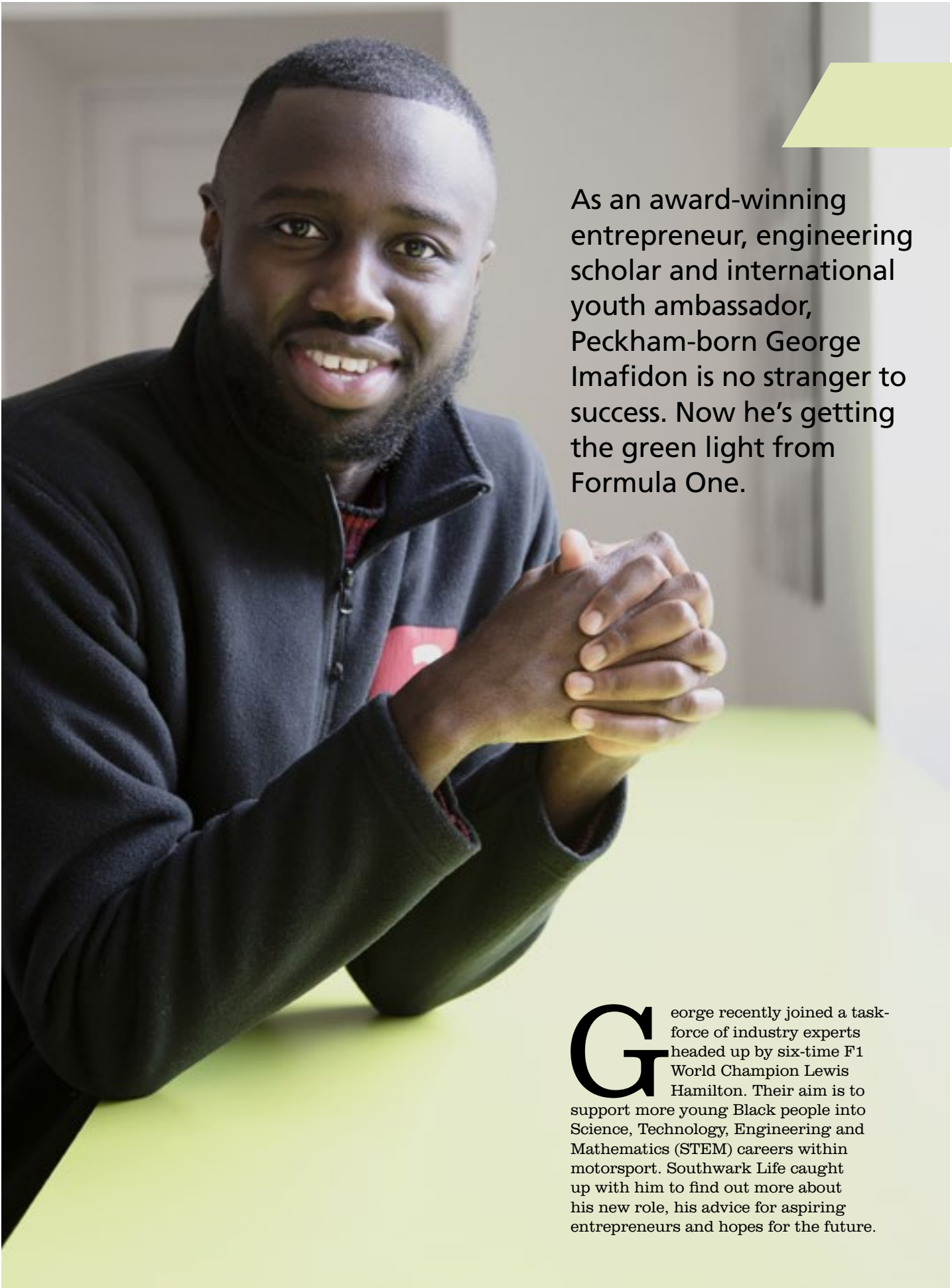
@lb\_southwark facebook.com/southwarkcouncil @southwarkcouncil

Care to join us?

0800 952 0707 southwark.gov.uk/fostering Support 24/7, training and allowance provided.



HCT245.02.2019



As an award-winning entrepreneur, engineering scholar and international youth ambassador, Peckham-born George Imafidon is no stranger to success. Now he's getting the green light from Formula One.

**G**eorge recently joined a task-force of industry experts headed up by six-time F1 World Champion Lewis Hamilton. Their aim is to support more young Black people into Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) careers within motorsport. Southwark Life caught up with him to find out more about his new role, his advice for aspiring entrepreneurs and hopes for the future.

# DRIVING TO GREATER DIVERSITY

## **Congratulations on joining The Hamilton Commission – what excites you most about this new responsibility?**

I'll be the youngest board member there so I'm excited to advocate for young people who dream of getting into motorsport but think there isn't a place for them. I remember watching Lewis Hamilton as a kid, winning all those races and dreamt of being there myself. It's a massive privilege to show them it can be done via different careers in STEM, not just as the next Lewis Hamilton. It shows dreams can come true!

## **What do you think are the key challenges facing young Black people entering STEM careers?**

I think being aware of opportunities in the first place is a massive challenge. When I was trying to get into the technology industry, I thought I wasn't qualified because I couldn't code. But actually there are loads of jobs in tech that require various different skills. Also the location of some STEM roles can be a barrier. For example, I had to leave London for my work with Rolls-Royce in Derby. Being able to move around the country is a luxury some young people just can't afford. The lack of visible role models in STEM also contributes to the lack of knowledge on what's possible.

## **How did the council's Scholarship Scheme help you pursue a degree in engineering?**

For me, the scholarship was priceless. Firstly, it helped alleviate financial pressures so I could focus fully on my studies. Secondly, the knowledge I was at university with the help of my community meant I was even more motivated to do my best. The scholarship definitely helped me make the most out of my four years at university and achieve a first-class mechanical engineering degree.

## **You've had internships at Google, Rolls-Royce and J.P. Morgan – did you have a favourite project you worked on?**

I think it would have to be when I independently redesigned a jet engine component during my ten weeks with Rolls-Royce. The component hadn't been touched in 40 years so I decided to investigate further. I managed to improve its aerodynamic efficiency by 40% and then pitched my design recommendations to senior engineers and the Director of Technology. In the end, my work as an intern helped improve the overall engine efficiency and

saved Rolls-Royce £50 million in research and development costs. That was pretty phenomenal.

## **Do you have any advice for aspiring young entrepreneurs during lockdown?**

I would say use this time to experiment and take risks. Some of the biggest and most successful businesses were built after a financial crash or crisis. And talk directly to your customers to better understand their needs. If you can support them in some way and build trust, they'll be with you for a long time.

## **You co-founded Motivez, an app linking young people with career development opportunities, and used the council's Positive Futures Fund. How did you find that?**

I found out about the fund through the council and my business coach. At first, I didn't think it was a real thing because I'd never seen an opportunity targeted specifically at young people like that before. The fund is all about giving hope to young people who are at risk of youth violence or might be feeling lost. Giving hope is exactly what drives me personally and my team at Motivez so we knew we had to apply.

## **You and co-founder Muizz Almaroof had the idea for Motivez in the Burger King on Peckham High Street. What role has Southwark played in your career so far?**

Peckham Library was great for Motivez's meetings in the early days and that's actually where we launched the app from. Then we moved to our current office at London South Bank University's Clarence Centre near St George's Circus. More generally, I think that no other borough invests in its young people like Southwark does. The community has instilled a huge amount of belief in me that I can succeed.

## **You champion greater diversity and empowering young people. What are your hopes for the future of Southwark?**

I hope Southwark can normalise success for other boroughs about what is possible with youth initiatives. I believe young people are the future and they'll continue to create innovative solutions, especially around a green recovery from COVID-19. We have to address the climate emergency so I hope the council, local businesses, residents and young people in the borough can come together to champion and lead the way on that response.

The Southwark Scholarship Scheme helps young people (under 25 years) pursue higher education. The council's scholarship award covers the full cost of tuition fees for their chosen university course. To find out more email [eba@southwark.gov.uk](mailto:eba@southwark.gov.uk)

Funding for projects co-designed by and aimed at young people in Southwark is available through the council's Positive Futures Fund. To find out more and apply for a grant, visit [www.southwark.gov.uk/positivefutures](http://www.southwark.gov.uk/positivefutures)



# CLIMATE CONFERENCE KICK STARTS CAMPAIGN

The Climate Emergency discussion, at the first of our new Empowering Communities meetings, was a resounding success, bringing together more than 130 residents, experts and council representatives on a Zoom call.



The council kick-started its work to tackle the Climate Emergency this autumn with an online community meeting. There were introductions, presentations, videos shared by the broader community and a breakout session where people on the call were placed in groups and debated specific environmental themes.

We were honoured to welcome Judy Ling Wong: environmentalist, artist and Honorary President of the Black Environmental Network. Judy talked about bringing communities together, and spoke with refreshing energy and enthusiasm. She offered examples of how people all over the world had bettered their environments through positive action.

Cllr Kieron Williams introduced himself as the new Leader of the Council. He explained that tackling the Climate Emergency is now a priority for the council and that it would run through every facet of the council's work, today, tomorrow and through the decade to come. He also spoke about the importance of making sure that this work served the less affluent as well it does the rich, and his aspiration to achieve greater equality and social justice, through this work.

Videos were shared reflecting thoughts and ideas about the Climate Emergency in Southwark, from people of all ages and communities across the borough. They talked about what we have already – such as the abundance of wildlife in our parks – and what we could aspire to – such as the clean air we all benefitted from during lockdown.



Everyone on the call was invited to a group session, and each group focused on one of the following themes, although with such a large audience, some themes were debated by two groups.

- Building construction and regeneration
- The energy we use
- Transport and travel
- Biodiversity, trees and green spaces
- Consumables: food, clothes and other goods

Councillors joined the groups and helped by answering questions and directing people to existing projects and funding streams, such as community gardening groups and composting ideas. Staff from Veolia, which manages the council's reuse and recycling centre, also helped and shared their expertise.

At the end of the session, each group returned and presented an idea that would make Southwark a greener, cleaner and healthier place to live. Ideas ranged from an audit of public spaces to support for food growing, to more cycle storage and free public transport.

We are carefully considering each of the group's ideas, and have promised to make good on our commitment to make one of them a reality. More on this coming soon...

You can learn more about Southwark and the Climate Emergency, and what you can do to help, here: [southwark.gov.uk/environment/climate-emergency](https://southwark.gov.uk/environment/climate-emergency)



TACKLING THE CLIMATE  
EMERGENCY TOGETHER  
IN SOUTHWARK





# MEET OUR NEW CLIMATE EMERGENCY TASKFORCE



Cllr Johnson Situ said: "The Climate Emergency is far reaching and affects all parts of our lives but for me, my passion to address our planet's biggest threat was inspired by different experiences.

"I am a keen runner and regularly run in the borough and further afield to explore new places. There are times when running that you can almost taste the pollution. I have also seen that wherever I run – whether it be on the Old Kent Road or the streets of Lilongwe in Malawi – it is the most vulnerable that suffer the impacts of climate change the most. When I visited India I saw, during a run, families living next to waste islands. We know it is the most disadvantaged across the globe that have the lowest quality housing which makes them more vulnerable to extreme weather conditions.

"We know that to meet our commitment of achieving net-zero emissions, we will need bold action from the council, key institutions across Southwark and the support from the Mayor of London. Nevertheless we can all take action in our own small way, the extra bit of recycling, or if you are lucky enough to have a garden or allotment, exploring growing food. I would offer some advice in this area but the last fruit I tried to grow didn't quite go to plan. For me, as well as walking and using public transport, I look forward to cycling much more often again. I have also looked at my own energy use and how I can reduce it, this won't be easy, and I must admit I am a work in progress myself but we can all play our part.

"As Cabinet Member for the Climate Emergency I am clear that for me this is a human crisis as well as an environmental crisis. I want to lead an approach that seeks to build on our response to the Climate Emergency. An approach that strengthens our communities, reduces inequalities and places sustainability at the heart of our borough's growth."



Cllr Radha Burgess said: "For me the Climate Emergency is partly about making sustainable choices in what we do and what we buy. I enjoy cooking and try to eat with the seasons, avoid food with excess food miles and shop locally.

"I'm also careful about buying food that's free from plastic packaging and am a ferocious recycler. I'm a big fan of jam, marmalade and jelly-making and it speaks to my thrifty instincts, a general desire to make rather than buy and a latent feeling that, come the apocalypse (or another lockdown) there will be a little jar of homemade raspberry jam to see us through.

"Like many people, we tried our hand at growing vegetables during lockdown. Our wonky carrots were delicious, if tiny, but best of all was planting potatoes that were at the bottom of the vegetable rack and had spouted 'eyes'. Two months later, they'd spawned new clusters of potatoes. Those spuds were the gift that kept on giving.

"As deputy cabinet member for Low Traffic Southwark I want to reduce air pollution on all of our streets, enable people to travel in a more healthy and active way, and reinvigorate high streets and communities"



# Echoes of the past

COVID-19 has dramatically changed our way of life – but it isn't the first time Southwark residents have met the challenge of a pandemic.

**I**t's popular to say that the COVID-19 crisis is an unprecedented chapter in the history of the world, and in some ways that's true. But Southwark has weathered pandemics before – most notably the influenza pandemic of 1918-1919, commonly known as Spanish flu.

Worldwide, the 1918 flu pandemic infected a third of the world's population, some 500 million people, and killed between 17 and 50 million people, in four waves between early 1918 and the spring of 1920. In London, there were three waves: mid-June to mid-August 1918; October to December 1918; and late-January to late-March 1919, which killed at least 18,000 Londoners. In a lot of ways, our ancestors must have felt, much like we do know, that their safe and familiar world was being turned upside-down by disease.

The densely populated northern part of the modern borough of Southwark – then the metropolitan boroughs of Southwark (covering Borough, Bankside, Elephant and Castle, and Walworth) and Bermondsey (covering Bermondsey and Rotherhithe) – were particularly hard hit: Southwark saw 589 flu deaths in 1918, making it the cause

of 15% of the borough's deaths that year. Flu also caused the death of 428 people in Bermondsey, which meant it caused more deaths (nearly 18%) there than TB, which killed 1 in 6 residents. The next year, flu deaths had declined, to 104 in Bermondsey 298 in Southwark (which included deaths due to complications of flu), and 218 in Camberwell (which covered Peckham, Nunhead, Camberwell, and Dulwich).

We'd find some things about the world of Spanish flu very familiar. R. King Brown, the Medical Officer of Health for Bermondsey, noted in his report on the health of the borough for 1918 that "... everything that interferes with health and vitality" predisposed people not only to catching flu, but also to poorer outcomes afterward: overcrowded and poor-quality (damp, draughty) housing, poor sanitation, and poor nutrition. All these factors, he continued, "... prepared the soil for this pandemic with the grave results of which we are already familiar." Brown also noted that the pandemic flu – like COVID-19 – was deadlier to people with pre-existing conditions like heart or lung disease.



He held that the best prevention measures Bermondsey residents could take were frequent washing of face, hands and mouth, "... plenty of open air and the avoidance of crowded places", much as we hear today. Bermondsey's public health department was putting out posters and flyers with prevention information – they undoubtedly were as familiar a sight to the residents of a century ago as they are to us now.

Brown's counterpart in Southwark, GB Millsom, put particular stress on overcrowded housing – with good reason, Southwark was one of, if not the, most densely populated borough in London. In his report on the state of Southwark's health for 1919, he wrote that "[t]he enormous increase in the wages has benefitted the able-bodied and fully-equipped portion of our population, but those unfortunately not in such an advantageously position are suffering acutely from the general high prices all round, and many of them are in a destitute condition."

But not everything about the world of Spanish flu matches up to the world of COVID-19. For one thing, the NHS was 30 years away in 1918 – those who couldn't afford to pay a private doctor were forced to negotiate a patchwork of charity provision, or do without.



*New public health initiatives*



Also unlike COVID-19, the largest number of Spanish flu deaths were in relatively young people: ages 15 to 34 in Bermondsey and 25 to 44 in Southwark. R King Brown believed that this was because younger people didn't simply go home and stay in bed, but tried to shake it off and get on with life as normal – leaving them vulnerable to additional infections like pneumonia. This explanation made sense more than a century ago, but it doesn't explain why the flu hit young, healthy people disproportionately hard. That, some studies have shown, may have been because the Spanish flu caused the immune system to overproduce inflammation-causing chemicals called cytokines; in a cytokine storm, a healthy immune system becomes a liability, not an asset.



*The new Tabard Estate*



But maybe the most unusual thing about the Spanish flu epidemic, looking back from the COVID-19 pandemic, is how little everyday life in the area changed. Secondary schools, churches, and workplaces remained open, and primary schools only closed when too many staff went down with flu to keep them open. The LCC special report on flu noted that, ultimately, officials felt closures "...would serve no useful purpose as a preventative measure." Similarly, R King Brown in Bermondsey dismissed mask-wearing as unacceptable to the British public and unlikely to prevent flu transmission; while his comments about having to be careful about taking masks off and on are familiar to us today, the dismissal says more about how little early 20th century bioscience knew about viruses and airborne disease transmission.

The Spanish flu left an enormous scar on the culture of the 20th century – as COVID-19 undoubtedly will on that of the 21st century. In its aftermath, reformers attempted to put the lessons they'd learned into place; in Bermondsey, this meant investing in public health, including education, TB screening, and treatment, culminating in the borough running its own municipal health service a decade before the NHS. In Southwark, the emphasis was on improving housing and eliminating overcrowding – collaborating with the LCC on a building programme that included the Tabard Estate.

We are already looking at the long term changes that need to be made in Southwark, from the disproportionate impact on BAME communities to the ways in which we work, and travel. But one thing is clear; our communities will come through these trying times as they did at the start of the last century.



# Festive family fun

## Southwark Libraries

Things may be a little different this Christmas as COVID-19 has meant the usual pantos, concerts and events have had to be cancelled or curtailed.

But that doesn't mean there isn't still plenty to entertain the family – even in your own home. For more festive fun visit the Stay at Home Library at [www.southwark.gov.uk/stayathomelibrary](http://www.southwark.gov.uk/stayathomelibrary)

### TREATS FOR TODDLERS TO TEENS



Southwark libraries have a range of activities for children this festive and New Year season. Here are some of the highlights:

#### Baby Rhyme Time online

Thursday 10 and 17 December 2020 11am to 11.30am

Booking is essential. For more information and to book your place email [elaine.walters@southwark.gov.uk](mailto:elaine.walters@southwark.gov.uk)



## ANCIENT STORY ADVENTURE

The Ancient Story Adventure will ignite children's imagination and launches during National Storytelling Week.

Start the adventure and join author and storyteller Sally-Pomme Clayton as she tells you amazing stories. Sally-Pomme will incorporate captivating artefacts from the Southwark Heritage Centre - The Cuming Online Collection to emphasise the key elements of her story: Birds, Horses, Kings, Queens and music. Join us in our storytelling events over the Spring term, and draw a picture based on Sally-Pomme's stories – 'The Phoenix of Persia' and 'Zarina and the Firebird'. We will display your picture in our online 'Story Adventure Gallery'.

**For children aged 7 to 11, from 6 February to 31 March, 2021.**

You can also create your own short story based on the stories that are told. Send your short stories and pictures to [southwark.libraries@southwark.gov.uk](mailto:southwark.libraries@southwark.gov.uk)

#### Ancient Story Adventure – The Phoenix of Persia



Live performance on Zoom, for families. Booking is essential. Email [southwark.libraries@southwark.gov.uk](mailto:southwark.libraries@southwark.gov.uk)

**Saturday 6 February, 2021 from 2pm to 3pm**

Join this fun and interactive performance about the magical phoenix and the prince who has brought up in a bird's nest! Learn about how stories from ancient Persia have been illustrated for more than 1000 years! And be inspired to create your own pictures. These stories are about acceptance and forgiveness, and discovering that each one of us is important and unique.



#### Ancient Story Adventure – Zarina and the Firebird

Live performance on Zoom for families. Booking is essential. Email [southwark.libraries@southwark.gov.uk](mailto:southwark.libraries@southwark.gov.uk)

**Wednesday 17 February, 2021 from 2pm to 3pm**

Join this magical fairytale. Meet bold heroine Zarina and her 39 (yes 39) sisters. Find out how the glittering Firebird helps Zarina turn a desert into an orchard, and bravely fight the terrible dust demon. Get ready to join in with actions and rhythms, and discover some beautiful illustrations to inspire your own drawings.



## MY PET STAR BOOK GIFT

From February to March 2021 children will love our free book gift when they visit a Southwark Library. **My Pet Star** by Corrinne Averiss and Rosalind Beardshaw is a joyous book for children 0 to 4 years. Read the story to your child and colour in the star together. They can collect their free book and activity materials from Southwark libraries that are open. (**My Pet Star** - Distributed by The Booktrust for Pyjamarama)

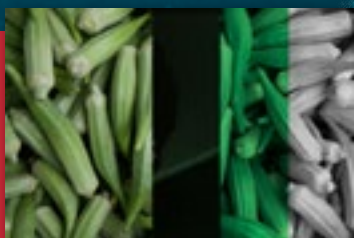


Check out our online children's video channel we have rhymes, crafts and stories.  
<http://bit.ly/read-sing-make>



## Other productions

### Solos



Goldsmiths Centre for Contemporary Art presents SOLOS, a series of new commissions by Appau Jnr Boakye-Yiadom, Emma Cousin, Lindsey Mendick and Hardeep Pandhal. All four are early career artists who have been making work at home or in their studios throughout the lockdown. Each artist will make a solo exhibition in an individual gallery in the CCA. Their work either explicitly, or implicitly, tracks the impact of lockdown on their practices.

**When:** From 3 December to 13 December 2020  
Wednesday to Sunday, 11am-6pm\*

**Where:** GOLDSMITHS CCA, St James',  
New Cross, London SE14 6AD

<https://goldsmithscca.art/exhibition/solos/>



### Christmas at the Imperial War Museum

Families will be able to get into the Christmas spirit at IWM London this holiday season. On 19 and 20 December, join in as we step back in time making magical decorations and weaving stories of festive cheer inspired by Christmas celebrations during the Second World War. Families can also learn about the global impact of conflict, from the First World War to the present day, through 'Story Seekers' every day throughout the holidays. Visitors will have the opportunity to get up close with real life artefacts and explore some of the most interesting and unusual stories of conflict, from people who braved shark-infested waters to ingenious nurses and those who built new machines fit for warfare.

**When:** 19 to 31 December 2020 (not including 25 & 26 December) Free, drop-in

[www.iwm.org.uk/visits/iwm-london/whats-on](http://www.iwm.org.uk/visits/iwm-london/whats-on)

### THE STORY OF LITTLE SNOW



The Blue Elephant Theatre is presenting a heart-warming story for families this Christmas.

The Story of Little Snow is a story about discovering self-worth and self-acceptance, as a Pixie called Little Snow brings winter snow drops to wake up the other flowers for spring. Blue Elephant Theatre's new show for families will be available online for a limited time!

For more information visit  
[www.blueelephanttheatre.co.uk](http://www.blueelephanttheatre.co.uk)



### A CHRISTMAS CAROL AT THE BRIDGE THEATRE

A Christmas Carol didn't just invent Christmas as we know it. It is also scary, joyful, spooky, hilarious, furious, beautiful, and a triumphant declaration that even the hardest heart can melt. Three outstanding actors – Simon Russell Beale, Patsy Ferran and Eben Figueiredo – come together to tell the story and play all the parts.



**When:** 3 December 2020 to 16 January 2021\*

**Cost:** Tickets from £15. Discount available for under 18s: £20 off £55 & £42.50 tickets. To find out more and book head to [bridgetheatre.co.uk](http://bridgetheatre.co.uk)

# TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR HEALTH

It's more important than ever to try and stay healthy, and there is support available.

**A**re you concerned about your family's health? Have you put on weight since lockdown? Are you stressed and lacking energy and want to get moving but don't know where to start? Do you want to manage your risk of COVID-19 by quitting smoking?

Take back control with our free Take Care Southwark services. Go to [www.southwark.gov.uk/takecare](http://www.southwark.gov.uk/takecare) or call **0333 005 0095**.

## Support programmes

Alive 'N' Kicking is a free 12-week course designed to help whole families to make small, easy changes to improve their health and wellbeing, through moving more and eating more healthily. It's for four to 17 year olds and their families that live in Southwark.

Families get a weekly one-to-one and group support via video link, and can access top tips via the Alive 'N' Kicking Facebook page and online home workouts via their YouTube Channel. For more information go to [southwark.gov.uk/healthyweightservices](http://southwark.gov.uk/healthyweightservices) or call **0333 005 0095**.



## Djelloul, Walworth resident

"We found out about Alive 'N' Kicking from the King's College Hospital nutritionist who advised us to join the scheme. I have three children of 13, 11 and 4 who took part with me. The scheme has had a great impact on my family. We do more exercise (football, running and basketball). We eat more healthy foods such as fruit and vegetables and we have reduced the size of our food portions. Since starting, I have seen a lot of benefits that I wasn't expecting. My children lost some weight and they became more motivated to eat more healthily and exercise more. We do a lot more exercise (4 to 5 hours a week) and we have reduced the sugary and fatty food we eat.

"I feel a lot happier about my children's health and wellbeing as a result of the programme. To keep up these changes in the future, I will have a consistent routine and stick to it, and make the new routine a habit. Alive 'N' Kicking has benefited my family. We have developed a healthier lifestyle around food and exercise by using the advice we got. I have also seen a difference in my children's weight. I would definitely recommend other families to participate in this programme."

# SUPPORTING SOUTHWARK'S BUSINESSES

We know that the majority of businesses in the borough have already taken enormous steps to operate in a safe and secure way during this pandemic and the new four-week restrictions, while necessary, will have a further impact.

However, COVID-19 remains a threat and the number of cases in Southwark is once again going up quickly. We appreciate all you are doing to help keep people safe and the council is here to offer support and advice to help you through this increasingly difficult time.

You can find all our COVID-19 Business Advice online at [www.southwark.gov.uk/Coronavirus](http://www.southwark.gov.uk/Coronavirus)

## SOUTHWARK'S ECONOMIC RENEWAL PLAN



In response to the economic difficulties arising from the COVID-19 pandemic, the council has developed an Economic Renewal Plan with immediate, short, medium and long term priorities. The plan will be centred around four key themes: employment and skills, business, high streets and town centres, and the wellbeing of our residents. The aim is to reduce and mitigate the economic impacts of the crisis. Our plan will support future inclusive economic growth in the face of these new economic challenges. You can find out more at [www.southwark.gov.uk/business/economic-renewal-plan](http://www.southwark.gov.uk/business/economic-renewal-plan)

## KICKSTART EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR 16 TO 24 YEAR OLDS

Is your organisation interested in creating an opportunity for a young person and becoming a Kickstart employer?

Southwark Council is working with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to support local businesses in creating 6 month job placements that will help young people gain valuable work experience and kickstart their careers. Your business will be able to apply for funding to cover the wages and employer contributions for each job placement, plus a one off £1,500 set up fee.

Applications must be for a minimum of 30 job placements and smaller employers can partner up to make an application through a Gateway Organisation. Southwark Council is a DWP approved Gateway Organisation. If you are interested in partnering with us to host a young person please contact [southwarkbusinessdesk@southwark.gov.uk](mailto:southwarkbusinessdesk@southwark.gov.uk) to find out more.

Further information is available on the Government's website at [www.gov.uk/government/collections/kickstart-scheme](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/kickstart-scheme)

## MAKING YOUR BUSINESS COVID-SECURE

We know that businesses across the borough are working hard to follow COVID-19 prevention guidance to keep staff and customers safe. Over recent months the government introduced stricter rules for businesses as COVID-19 cases increased.

Visit [www.southwark.gov.uk/coronavirus-business](http://www.southwark.gov.uk/coronavirus-business) for the latest advice, guidance and support for you and your employers.

## DONATE DEVICES TO SUPPORT DIGITALLY EXCLUDED RESIDENTS

COVID-19 has hit our residents without access to smart technology or the internet particularly hard.

Hubbub is running Community Calling in partnership with O2 to encourage old, workable smartphones, and other devices, to be gifted to vulnerable and socially isolated people and offer them accompanying digital skills training.

We are asking businesses to get involved to transform the lives of the digitally excluded in their local communities. Your donation will unlock a whole year of digital connectivity for someone who currently has no internet access.



Find out more at [www.hubbub.org.uk/communitycalling](http://www.hubbub.org.uk/communitycalling) and contact [hello@hubbub.org.uk](mailto:hello@hubbub.org.uk) to get involved.

## MENTOR A BAME- LED BUSINESS

Developer Lendlease is seeking interest from organisations, businesses and entrepreneurs across Southwark in a range of industries to support and mentor independent BAME-led businesses at Elephant Park. Your support will help these businesses to succeed and grow following the impact of COVID-19 by becoming part of a mentoring network. Please contact [rachel.jenman@lendlease.com](mailto:rachel.jenman@lendlease.com) to find out more.



# COVID SYMPTOMS?

**YOU MUST SELF ISOLATE  
AND BOOK A TEST AT**

**[www.nhs.uk/coronavirus](https://www.nhs.uk/coronavirus)**

**OR CALL 119**

**Protect your friends and family**