

Understanding Southwark Daily life and the impact of COVID-19 across the borough

First phase of area-based qualitative analysis:

Key Findings

October 2020





Summary

This interim report brings together the emerging themes and findings from qualitative research carried out in six areas of Southwark: Camberwell, Dulwich, Elephant and Castle, Old Kent Road, Peckham and Walworth. This is the first phase of a year-long project starting in April 2020 exploring daily life in these six areas, how people feel about their local area and recent changes, and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on residents' daily lives. A second round of research will take place in November 2020, with a final round in early 2021.

The research took place between June and early September 2020. It gives a snapshot of life in these six areas during this time. At the beginning of this period, London was emerging from lockdown restrictions and non-essential retail and facilities were still closed. As we moved into the summer, the lockdown restrictions were progressively relaxed.

The first phase of the qualitative research focused on six key themes, drawing on Southwark Council's social regeneration indicators: a healthier life, a place to belong, local change and control, safety, local assets and challenges, and the impact of COVID-19 on everyday life. The research engaged people from a wide range of local settings and backgrounds across the six areas, relying on in-depth telephone interviews with local stakeholders, face-to-face interviews with local traders, and street interviews and in-depth walking ethnographies with local residents.

In this first round of the research we spoke to 246 residents through street interviews, 24 through in-depth walking ethnographies, 41 traders and 55 stakeholders from different public sector and third sector agencies, as well as community groups and local activists.

This research is part of a wider commission from Southwark Council. Alongside the research in six areas, Social Life has carried out a residents survey, using phone interviews, and is completing a survey of businesses. The final strand is in-depth research into the experience of people who are financially vulnerable, including people with no recourse to public funds, people experiencing benefit sanctions, people in precarious and poorly paid work, and people who have multiple needs and vulnerabilities.

Social Life is based in Elephant & Castle. This project is informed by our local experiences, and the research we have carried out in the borough over the past few years: in Rotherhithe; around the <u>Biscuit Factory in Bermondsey</u>; on the <u>Aylesbury Estate</u> in <u>Walworth</u> and most recently <u>around St Thomas Street and London Bridge</u>.

Method

The research design took into account the demographics, characteristics, social needs and planned change in the six areas. Social Life's COVID-19 protocols were followed to ensure the safety of research participants and researchers.

We anticipated that fewer people would participate in face-to-face research because of anxieties about COVID-19, physical distancing and indoor gathering restrictions. In-depth qualitative approaches were designed to compensate for this and to ensure that we gathered rich and comprehensive data despite the circumstances. Fieldwork between July and September confirmed that people were more likely to participate in street interviews if the questions asked were open-ended, as they were seen to be an invitation to join a dialogue.

The in-depth qualitative approach and the range of other methods we used also helped address potential biases because of the limited participation of some groups, especially older people and people who were shielding. It also allowed the people we interviewed to go beyond the immediate context of the impact COVID-19 had on their lives and to take a longer-term view when answering.

Street interviews with local residents lasted between 10 and 20 minutes, and took place in a variety of locations across the six areas, including parks, green spaces around estates, playgrounds, and pavements. The in-depth telephone interviews with local stakeholders lasted on average an hour, while walking ethnographies lasted between an hour and two hours. During the walking ethnographies, researchers took photographs of places that were important to the people being interviewed. This enabled us to capture detailed layered snapshots of residents' lived experiences and perceptions.

A comparative perspective

The research areas were developed after discussion with Southwark officers and other stakeholders to focus on the neighbourhoods and residents that are most likely to be affected by change and regeneration. These areas broadly correspond to the council's regeneration areas. The approach to Dulwich differed from the other areas as this is a larger geographic area, and one with a substantial affluent population. Our focus therefore was on people living in Dulwich's social housing estates.

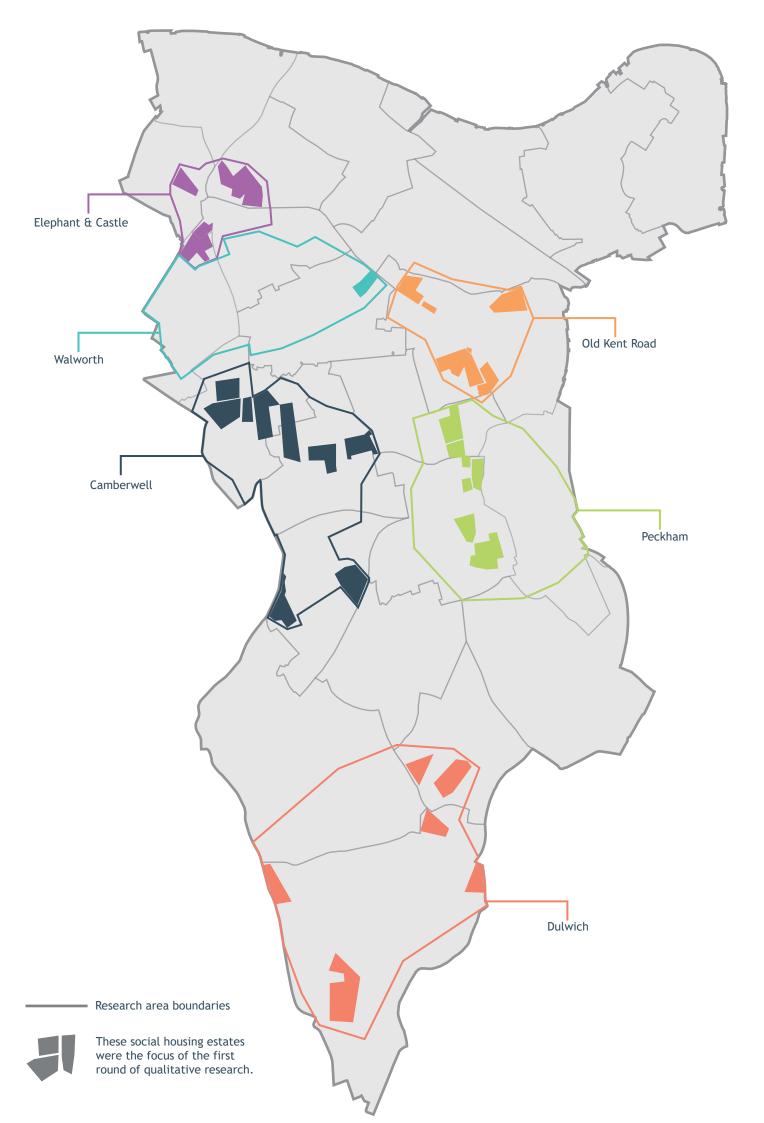
When comparing emerging themes findings across the six areas, the similarities outweigh the differences. Some of the similarities were about assets or positive features, while others represent challenges common to local residents and traders across Camberwell, Dulwich, Elephant and Castle, Old Kent Road, Peckham, and Walworth.

Similarities

- 1. **Diversity, transport connectivity and green spaces.** Residents across the six areas identified these as important assets in their local areas.
- 2. Feelings of belonging. Most residents feel attached to their local areas, often this is because they have grown up in the area or are long-term residents. Newer residents also reported that the local area has become a home to them.
- 3. Social relationships. Across the six areas, a majority of residents reported that they have local connections they can turn to for help or support. Residents noted lower levels of interaction between people from different backgrounds than people who consider themselves to be similar.
- 4. Control over change in the local area. Residents and traders reported low levels of voice and influence in local areas, the reasons for this varied. There is a widespread cynicism around consultation and the impact that local voices have on local decision-making, particularly among people with fewer resources (in time and money) and BAME groups. It was widely noted that opinions about new housing developments polarise feelings in all six areas.
- **5.** A lack of provision for young people. The lack of activities, spaces or educational and employment opportunities for young people was one of the biggest concerns amongst residents, stakeholders and traders.
- **6. Mental health.** A majority of stakeholders and residents from all six regeneration areas stated that mental health issues represent a significant challenge. COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown measures have aggravated the existing problems for many.
- 7. **Inequality.** In all the areas, differences between the life experiences of people who were struggling to get by, and more affluent residents, were highlighted as an important factor shaping everyday life, experiences of COVID-19 and lockdown.

Differences

- 1. Walkability. In Walworth and Elephant and Castle, this was seen as a major asset of the local areas alongside diversity, transport connectivity and green spaces.
- 2. Safety. Many residents felt that their areas are safe during the day but less so at night. In Old Kent Road, however, perceptions of safety amongst residents and traders ranged widely, with some believing the area had successfully moved on from a more violent past, whilst others often local traders reported that crime has worsened. In Peckham, knowing people locally and having "eyes on the streets" were important to residents' perception of increased public safety. In Walworth and Camberwell there were particular pockets that were felt to be unsafe although the area overall was felt to be safe.
- 3. Community life. While community life was brought up in interviews across the six areas, Old Kent Road's stakeholders and residents were more likely to cite this it as the key local asset or strength.
- **4. Support for migrant groups.** The need for support services was brought up by a number of stakeholders who work with migrant groups in Elephant and Castle, Peckham and Dulwich. Among these, stakeholders flagged the lack of translation services for migrants and noted that this has a negative impact on inclusion, access to local services, and health and education outcomes.





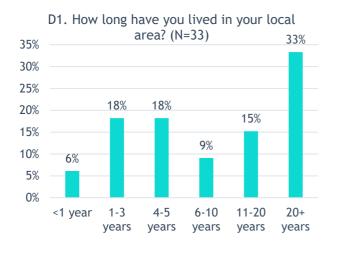
CAMBERWELL

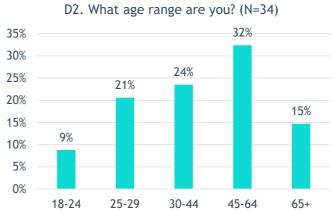
Who we spoke with

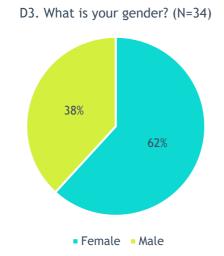
Stakeholders: nine **in-depth interviews**, including a faith organisation, three community organisations, two development centres (one youth-based, one ethnicity-based), a business network, two local agencies.

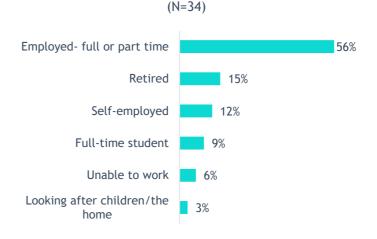
Traders: interviews with eight traders (two were Black/British-owned businesses, two White Other, three White English, one Asian), including the following typologies: bakery, café, laundrette, bike shop, grocery, barbers, tailor, hairdressers, nail salon.

Local residents: walking ethnographies with four residents. **Street interviews** with 35 residents, demographics below.

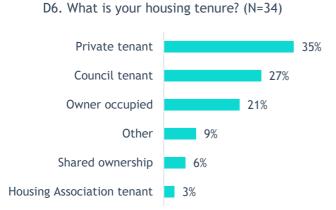


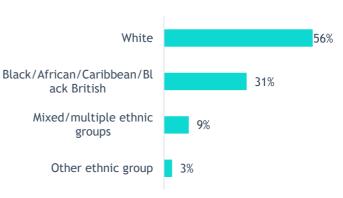






D4. What is your current employment status?





D7. What is your ethnic group? (N=32)

Generally, residents noted that people in Camberwell get on well with people from other backgrounds in the local area. Churches, a community centre, cafes, pubs, local clubs, and parks are mentioned by residents as places to socialise or spaces where they have built their networks of support. However, there are mixed views the way that people from different backgrounds interact, and significant number of residents reported that they do not often engage with their neighbours and do not rely on community supports.

Residents noted that there could be more interaction between people from different backgrounds. A number commented that more community events and activities would encourage broader participation and would help develop networks of support.

"I like how multicultural it is, so I wish we could make things accessible and bring people together. COVID highlighted that people need support (it instigated it), isolation is hard, there's fear, mental health issues - we should know more about each other. We need more people to connect and talk to each other and ask for help." (resident) 1

Residents reported a strong sense of belonging to the local area, citing a wide range of reasons, including having being born there, access to amenities, diversity, familiarity with the area and knowing their neighbours.

"Yes, [I belong]! I have been here a long time, from when it was nothing, and do feel like I belong - it's like any relationship, they have their ups & downs but you have to stick with it, not just chop and change; how will you ever build anything that lasts?" (resident)

When asked whether there are any groups that have a more difficult time in the local area, residents responded that differences in income and health vulnerabilities have made certain groups struggle more than others.

Local change and control

The majority of residents and traders reported that they did not feel they have control over what happens in their local area and did not feel their voices are being heard.

"No, I guess, the few times I've engaged with the council it's been difficult. I don't know where to get more info about the outcome. I don't know where to report safety issues in Camberwell. I tried reporting anti-social behaviour, but was told it was not an emergency, so I left voicemail and then didn't hear back. There's a lack of response. Voices aren't heard." (resident)

The research shows that there are mixed views about the changes that are taking place locally. A significant number of residents emphasised their concerns that lower-income residents were being displaced by change. Stakeholders and residents noted that while affordable housing is needed, it should not replace green spaces as this would disproportionately impact families and older people.

"Not sure how I feel about the changes taking place through regeneration in the local area. Redevelopment behind Sainsbury's (football club grounds) will increase housing. But there are also negatives - flats, more pressure on transport. It will negatively affect families, but some see the positives. I'm neutral." (resident)

Residents also seemed unsure about who gets to benefit from the changes that are taking place in their local areas. Some did not feel that the longstanding residents are benefitting from the new housing or new businesses that are coming into the area.

"I think the changes should be for the whole community and not just for the few. For example, there was this nursery, and they closed it, and opened a pawn shop, and then they closed that and built penthouse flats. So, it's the better off who benefit, but really it should be the whole community." (resident)

¹ The quotes used in this report have been edited for clarity.

A healthier life

Local stakeholders mentioned that there is a high degree of health expertise in the area, as the local area is in the proximity of two major hospitals. Parks and green spaces are seen as supporting a healthier life in the local area, and both residents and local stakeholders mentioned the positive impact these assets have on physical and mental health of those living locally.

"I like the greenery...it's a wellness feature which allows people to walk and cycle...Ruskin Park, Brockwell Park, Dulwich Park - there's a lot of trees." (resident)

Some of the stakeholders flagged that recent migrants and people with no recourse to public funds have limited access to healthcare. Also, mental health appeared as a major challenge in the local area. Stakeholders said that vulnerable local populations such as people with dementia have confronted additional struggles during lockdown. Stakeholders noted that these groups have less resilience, which makes them more vulnerable to crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown.

"Carers haven't been coming around to look after people with dementia. They have been abandoned. Volunteers have taken responsibility for looking after these people. They are not supposed to be doing this. Also, neighbours have had to step in." (stakeholder)

Many residents also brought up concerns about noise, pollution and air quality caused by local traffic.

"There is a big problem with pollution and noise because Peckham Road serves as a major transportation artery to the lorries that carry goods from warehouses west of London into central and south London. In Camberwell, this is particularly bad because the road is close to the estates and high streets, meaning that the levels of CO2 that people inhale in the area are very high." (resident)

Safety

Most residents reported feeling safe in Camberwell. A few, however, commented that they avoid some places, because of anti-social behaviour such as drinking and people hanging around, for example, on Camberwell Church Street and Camberwell Green.

Local assets and challenges

Green spaces, local diversity, easy access to central London, and having shops and supermarkets nearby were the main local assets mentioned by residents. Perceptions of transport links were more mixed; some residents mentioned that there are good connections to other parts of Camberwell, Brixton, Peckham and East Dulwich, while others believed that transport links across south London could be improved. Tight local communities were perceived as an important asset, especially because they offer various supports for vulnerable groups.

"There are parks in the local area where I can socialise, especially Camberwell Green and Ruskin Park. It's also easy to get transport (there are buses and trains everywhere)." (resident)

The lack of opportunities for young people in Camberwell was a common concern for stakeholders and residents. It was mentioned that, while local education is rather good, there are few outside school activities and spaces for young people. Some stakeholders spoke about the need for enrichment activities outside school to support children's aspirations at an early age. Stakeholders and residents also discussed the lack of good quality work for young people and ethnic minority residents.

Traffic and air quality were also seen as major challenges by residents and stakeholders. Lack of parking was flagged as a challenge by some residents and traders, especially in the context of COVID-19 lockdown when people started to rely more on their cars for everyday shopping.

"Parking needs to be improved. I used to have a lot of clients but lost them because of parking. Hair can take five hours, so it adds up. Now people are avoiding public transport more, so they need parking, or people will choose alternative places to do their hair." (trader)

Impact of COVID-19 on everyday life

The main concerns cited by stakeholders and residents that they associated with COVID were the loss of jobs in the local area, increasing strain on mental health, the few places to socialise, the move to online education, and digital exclusion of those without devices or limited internet access and digital skills.

"The pandemic has affected everyone. It's not like before. We implemented social distancing and safety rules and hand gel at each station in the shop. We stopped watching football in shop because of social distancing; football would bring a lot of people into the shop who came to watch it together." (trader)

A number of stakeholders flagged that local residents with multiple vulnerabilities were disproportionately affected by the pandemic and restrictions, as many remained isolated for long periods of time. Some residents mentioned that, during the lockdown, they started volunteering to help others who were shielding or helping neighbours with groceries or prescriptions. This made them feel more involved in their local communities at a time when other community activities had been brought to a halt.

"During COVID19 there was a WhatsApp group created called 'The Denmark Hill Estate' and there were other similar groups created to help out in other estates. Leaflets were posted so people knew they could get help. It's a keen community and people help those in need who use to live isolated. The community helped with groceries, collections for groups, donations and prescription pick up for vulnerable people." (resident)

The impact of COVID-19 on small local traders has been substantial, the majority of those we spoke with reported significant difficulties. Some who had just reopened after a period of three-four months said that footfall in Camberwell was still low. Bringing back customers was seen as a challenge, even as lockdown restrictions were being lifted. A small number of traders noted that they extended lines of credit to their customers more often than before "but only for loyal customers, as it doesn't help the business".

"So quiet because of COVID. We shut for four months. We're trying to rebuild up the shop from scratch and encourage old regulars." (trader)

"A lot has changed. Tried to do it slowly, in phases. First two weeks of lockdown, we participated in the scheme for NHS staff, where local people bought food and we cooked and delivered food to them. This helped us to keep going and showed our support to the NHS. Doing home deliveries and collections for online orders increased. We furloughed and cut staff, and changed from being a sitin cafe to doing only takeaway, expanding the grocery part of the store. Probably won't be a cafe again." (trader)

Local traders were concerned about the future, anticipating difficulties paying rent and bills in coming months. Some mentioned that they were thinking about shifting their business to make it more convenient for customers, for instance by doing home deliveries.

"People are not coming in. Employees can't work. People are scared to come out. I need a word for more than "worse" to describe how bad the business is doing." (trader)

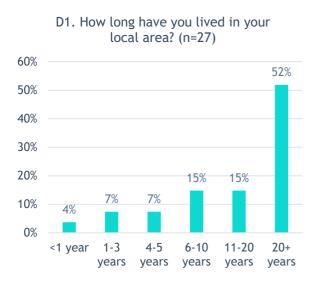


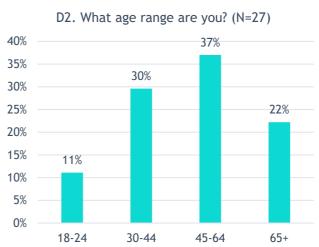
DULWICH

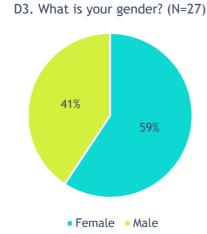
Who we spoke with

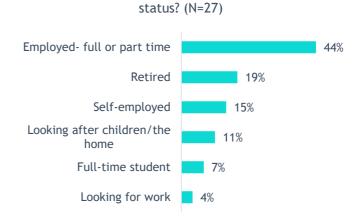
Stakeholders: eight **in-depth interviews**, including a TRA, a GP, two faith organisations, a children's centre, a community space, a community organisation, and a museum.

Local residents: walking ethnographies with three residents. An **in-depth telephone interview** with a resident with a visual impairment disability. **Street interviews** with 27 residents, demographics below.

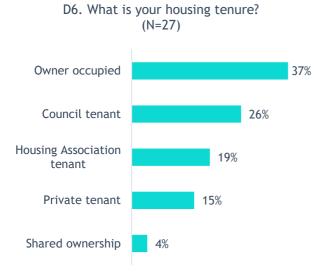


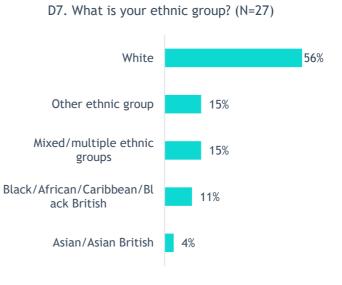






D4. What is your current employment





The majority of residents described feeling a strong sense of belonging to the area, and to the social housing estates. Residents reported being involved in community life, including the TRAs and other community groups.

"I'm part of the TRA hall and we have kids' activities. It's the hub for the estate." (resident)

Families describe long-term neighbourly relationships, seeing these as networks of support and an important part of everyday life. Neighbourliness was also seen to be as contributing to social integration across age groups. Church gatherings, community centre activities and local volunteering were described as important parts of community life.

"Yes, because I lay down roots. Also, my church is important. I do feel like I belong. I feel that I have stability and security." (resident)

"I have the support of the community centres which is a good place to get to meet and get to know people." (resident)

Several stakeholders noted that are a number of discrete communities, which are identifiable by their wealth or poverty. One church minister described the difficulties in bringing together people from different backgrounds, as their congregation is overwhelmingly white and wealthy, "though warm and welcoming". Another church minister, with a more ethnically mixed congregation, highlighted how their black church members are worried about their children being involved in knife crime, whilst white members see it as a distant problem.

Several stakeholders said that there is a lack of provision for young people and that many youth clubs had closed, leaving young people with nowhere to congregate. This was echoed by some residents who complained about the behaviour of groups of young people.

"There's nothing for kids 16 years old and over, you just see them hanging around in groups, they sit in the square and Diamond Park chatting away." (resident)

Local change and control

Residents appear divided on whether they have control over change in their area. Whilst some reported that they feel involved, through their local TRA and communications with their MP, others report frustration at not being listened to by the council. One resident commented that, although they have input, they do not have control. On one estate, fears about building more homes galvanised a successful community effort by the TRA to resist this. Local stakeholders report that some residents feel intimidated by council representatives.

"Council officers are pushing the regeneration in a very intimidating way. They are using residents by telephoning them an asking them to take part in a survey about regeneration. They are saying it's from the housing office but it has nothing to do with housing. People are feeling intimidated." (stakeholder)

The closure of facilities and all but a few shops on one of the largest estates was viewed by residents and stakeholders alike as a major loss to social life.

"The laundry was a place that you could hang out and meet people while you're waiting for your washing to be done." (resident)

"The shops are the most important part of the estate apart from the station. You can get your basics milk, bread, potatoes but it's not what it used to be. All the shops are shut now and that's even before COVID, only three shops remain open: the community shop and the two corner shops." (resident)

A healthier life

Stakeholders reported a stark divide between residents living in privately owned or rented housing and those living in social housing on the large estates, noting that people living in social housing experience poorer health outcomes. Overcrowded housing, a lack of provision for mental health at community level, a rise in domestic

abuse during lockdown, social isolation of both older people and hard to reach communities, and a lack of locally accessible GPs and health centres were all cited as having an impact on local residents' physical health and wellbeing. Overcrowding in social housing was perceived as contributing to depression and associated mental health problems. These issues were further exacerbated by poor quality housing.

"Mental health seems to have risen across all sections especially in younger people, however provision is concentrated at acute level - so medicalised, rather than focusing at community level." (stakeholder)

Stakeholders noted that the lack of support for people experiencing mental health problems disproportionately affects young mothers with young children, older people and young people. Older people, in particular those with long-term health conditions, are perceived as especially vulnerable to social isolation and loneliness. Stakeholders highlighted that access to services and support is difficult for people with mobility impairments. Residents with no recourse to public funds were mentioned as experiencing poorer health outcomes, in part because of language barriers, which make difficult access to information and services. Stakeholders also mentioned that domestic abuse has significant impact on families and healthcare provision, especially during COVID-19.

"Domestic abuse - women don't access services because they are not allowed to. We see more than before COVID-19 as women can't leave their home and this also has a big impact on children." (stakeholder)

Safety

The majority of residents reported feeling safe, attributing this good lighting, no visible violence, a sense of calm and quiet and a low crime rate. When residents brought up incidents of crime, they noted that these were not common.

"I don't feel under threat as a woman. In 10 years I've only seen one lady get mugged." (resident) "Yes, it's well lit. Low crime rate. People are friendly and check in with each other". (resident)

Stakeholders mentioned a lack of CCTV and police presence on the estates, alongside a rise in drug related activities. A recent murder on one estate was described as very traumatic for the local community.

Local assets and challenges

Residents and stakeholders unanimously praised the many open spaces, parks and woods in the area, describing these as major assets that contribute to making the area feel peaceful and child friendly, assets for leisure and a place to go. Residents described the importance of clean and well-maintained outside spaces on the estates.

"We go for walks and to the local woods, it's still in the community." (resident)

"Plenty of places for dogs, it's a lot greener than other parts of Southwark, there's a local forest up the hill." (resident)

Public transport was described as good by some residents, whilst others complained of erratic trains and the lack of a nearby tube station. Traffic and air pollution on the South Circular were frequently mentioned, as was litter and fly tipping. Stakeholders reported the connection between poverty and poor education. Some noted low levels of aspiration amongst young people. One church minister flagged the lack of black role models for young people.

"Members of the congregation say: 'If all people in leadership are white, what does that say to my child?'" (stakeholder)

"What's missing is help on the estate to get people into employment to get them help with job applications." (stakeholder)

The impact of COVID-19 on everyday life

Stakeholders reported that COVID-19 has severely impacted on members' ability to engage with their services. One early years provider told us that during the COVID-19 lockdown, they were able to engage with only five percent of the 4,000 people who regularly visit. Even when stakeholders were able to move some services online, many people are unable to make use of these because of digital poverty. Digital poverty - the lack of equipment and connectivity - also affects some children and young people who cannot access online lessons.

BAME residents were believed to be more likely to exclude themselves from services because of fears about COVID-19. Some residents did not know how to access help because of language barriers. People from black and minority ethnic communities are perceived to be disproportionately affected by the closing of places of worship and the restrictions on funeral gatherings.

"People had to grieve alone with tiny funerals. West African funerals are usually huge, so this has had a big emotional impact. West Africans sing and dance together and you cannot underestimate how this will take its toll as it's so important to them". (stakeholder)

The research shows that many older people in the local area were anxious and, for a long period of time, fearful of leaving their homes. Some stakeholders noted that lockdown meant that some older people were able to get to know their neighbours better, strengthening local relations. Stakeholder also reported that families, especially those living in overcrowded homes, struggled with everyday life. Stakeholders also commented on the problem for families unable to visit grandparents and other members of the extended family.

Residents with disabilities spoke about additional difficulties in navigating public transport and shopping, increasing the stress of dealing with everyday tasks.

"As visually impaired people, we need to touch much more and need to use the handrail and we need to pick items up in shops. We are told not to handle stuff because of the virus but we can't not do that!" (resident)

The loss of work as a result of lockdown has impacted negatively on people's mental health and relationships.

Stakeholders engaging with wealthier residents in the area described a generous and active community, which worked with the local food bank during COVID-19 lockdown, sharing food and resources.



ELEPHANT AND CASTLE

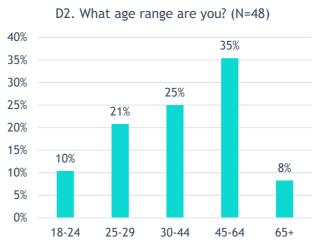
Who we spoke with

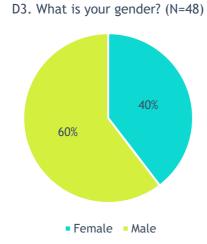
Stakeholders: 10 **in-depth interviews**, including two local TRAs, a GP, a faith organisation, an academic institution, a community centre, and four local agencies/activists.

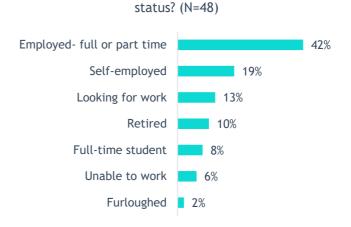
Traders: interviews with five traders (all Latin American-owned businesses), including the following typologies: mini supermarket, coffee shop, food shop, butcher shop, restaurant.

Local residents: walking ethnographies with five residents. **Street interviews** with 48 residents, demographics below.

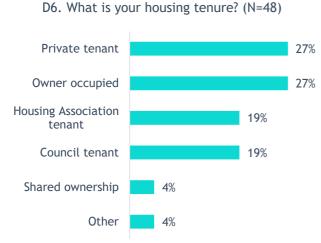


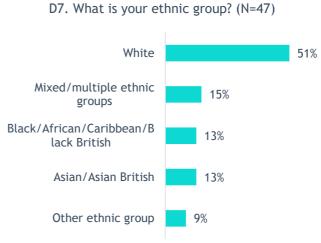






D4. What is your current employment





The majority of local residents reported that they felt they belonged to the local area. Length of stay, comfort, accessibility of local amenities and diversity were listed as main reasons for feelings of belonging. When asked about how local residents get along, the majority of residents were positive. They noted that, while the local area is diverse, there is respect for other communities and their cultures. Other residents had more neutral views about relationships between local communities, highlighting that local residents are only brought together across ethnic and socio-economic boundaries by a common purpose.

"I think it's a diverse area, you tend to see a lot of segregation, commonalities like dogs or gym bring people together but apart from that no. Diverse but not integrated." (resident)

The elements of social infrastructure that support local relationships and a sense of belonging include pubs, local markets, the local leisure centre (The Castle Centre), and the Elephant & Castle Shopping Centre (which was still open at the time of the research). The Cinema Museum and Imperial War Museum were also mentioned by residents as places for socialising and are seen as community assets. Some respondents noted the importance of streets for socialising with neighbours. Stakeholders mentioned that local events and community activities play an important role in bringing people together in the local area and help create a sense of belonging.

"There are many activities and events the Latin American community organises for their community members, such as the "Carnaval del Pueblo" that used to take place in Burgess Park. The sense of community that appears in many of these events and places (such as restaurants and churches where people connect with others) is what makes people want to live [in Elephant & Castle]." (stakeholder)

Both stakeholders and residents said that feelings of belonging and feelings toward change are interconnected, highlighting how ongoing change in Elephant & Castle is affecting local communities. Long-standing residents as well as newcomers mentioned that there are competing priorities for the redevelopment of the local area, raising questions about which groups get to direct local change and whose needs matter most.

Some residents were positive about new businesses, saying that these have become part of their everyday routines as they are places of to socialise with friends and family. The "diversified" new business environment is making them feel welcome and supports their consumption habits. A few residents remarked that these changes are providing alternatives to the longer-standing ethnic shops. However, a large number of the residents interviewed were critical of these local changes. They mentioned that the loss of independent businesses made them and others feel displaced and question whether they still belong to the area. They questioned whether they could afford to remain part of the local community in years to come. Regardless of their views on local change, local residents were concerned about the future of the long-standing BAME and lower-income communities in Elephant & Castle.

"I'm very happy with the change. Best thing that'll happen in area. The local community will be affected. People moved out. Community has changed. People in new buildings don't mix in the community. We call them 'building people' and us 'community people'. Will be good to do more community activities in the park, such as a festival." (resident)

Local change and control

The research highlights that local change needs to be understood in the different ways it impacts on local groups and the built environment. Some residents focused on the positive impact of local change, highlighting the improved green spaces, cycling infrastructure, and other new amenities such as coffee shops and restaurants. The majority of residents and stakeholders, however, focused their attention on the negative impact of change. They noted that recent changes have impacted disproportionally lower-income and BAME local residents and traders, and have had detrimental impact on feelings of belonging and perceptions of community life. A large number of local residents reported that local regeneration has unfolded without taking into account local needs and communities.

"I don't object to regeneration but I object to the way they're doing it. I object to traders who have been here 15 years that have got nowhere to work. I used to have a stall. Lots of high streets are shutting, betting shops, charity shops, cafes, there's not enough variety in the new

developments and not enough social housing." (resident)

When asked about whether they felt they had a sense of control over local change, the majority of local residents and traders answered that they did not feel they had control. Some responses referred to everyday incidents that did not get solved when reported to the council or the police, while other referred to larger issues such as the way in which the planning process is set up or who gets to participate in local consultations, including who has the time and resources to attend these meetings.

"No, no sense of control at all. There is very little from the police to solve problems. That's one of the reasons why he can't even put a table outside of the market: if he did that, it would be used by people who engage in anti-social behaviour. If he reports them to the police, nothing happens... and it's something that has happened for many years now." (trader)

The more positive views on control over local change came from residents who were involved in TRAs or have had experience in other local groups. But even those who expressed positive views brought up the fact that there is no clear route to impact local change.

"Market forces are unleashed on the area. It's difficult to push against. There's no clear route to impact change and have your voice heard. It may come to no good even when you organise, the market forces might still win." (resident)

A healthier life

Well-established community spaces and local networks were mentioned by both stakeholders and residents as resources that contribute to physical and mental health. The research indicate that this is particularly important for migrant populations, as many of them rely substantially on this social infrastructure to socialise, get advice, or look for jobs. A few mentioned that people from various local communities go to Elephant & Castle Shopping Centre and East Street Market not only for shopping or to send money to families in their countries of origin but also because, in these places, they meet up with people from their communities. Through their impact on mental and emotional health, these places are seen to benefit health in the Elephant and Castle area.

"I believe that the strength and weaknesses of Elephant & Castle is related to the degree to which people have or not networks of support." (stakeholder)

Local stakeholders, traders and residents agreed to a large extent that the number of homeless people and people with mental problems in the area is a challenge for the area. Some stakeholders reported that an increasing number of charities are trying to help homeless people in the local area. Stakeholder and residents believe that there is a need for a 24 hours support service that can help people in need.

Another issue mentioned by a number of stakeholders was the connection between health and poverty. Stakeholders highlighted that low paid jobs or precarious jobs are an important social determinant of health. Stakeholders and residents also brought attention to pollution and traffic and the impact on health. Some connected these to the Elephant & Castle regeneration, which has increased traffic and pollution. Several local residents, however, mentioned that recent "low traffic neighbourhood" measures have improved air quality and street safety, which has an impact on both their physical and mental health.

Safety

Most residents reported positive perceptions of safety during day time. Some said that in the evening and at night they are more cautious, avoiding certain areas. Safety is perceived differently by people from different age and ethnic groups, with BAME and young and elderly groups experiencing most unease. Local residents who have lived in the local area for more than ten years reported feeling generally safe.

"Yes- I cycle everywhere. Different if you're a girl or teen. I'm not an at-risk demographic." (resident); "Yes, I've lived here a long time. Everyone knows me. I know the street". (resident)

Local assets and challenges

The research shows that many residents and stakeholders believe that the main strength of Elephant & Castle lies in its diversity. Relatedly, stakeholders see the area as a hub for different activities: it is an important centre for commerce of all kinds of products (many people go to Elephant & Castle to shop for things that are not available in areas they live), the universities bring to the area an enormous diversity of people (local and international). Elephant & Castle is an important transport hub and an important meeting point. The area is home to people from very different backgrounds. Other assets mentioned by residents, stakeholders and traders were proximity to central London, local connectivity and the cycling infrastructure.

Stakeholders and residents mentioned the main challenges as high levels of unemployment, low-quality jobs and the lack of translation services, including at GPs, hospitals, schools and council offices. A few stakeholders raised the difficulties experienced by 'invisible' groups with an 'irregular legal status': people can become excluded from formal supports because of their legal status, or self-exclude because they fear the repercussions that might come from engaging with authorities. Stakeholders noted that people in this situation often have low trust in state institutions and rely on the few local organisations (such as GPs, food banks) that do not ask about legal status, or on informal networks, usually from the same religious or ethnic background. Some stakeholders also mentioned that the lack of translation services increases stress and makes some local residents prone to isolation and depression because they cannot communicate with local institutions or access local supports.

Impact of COVID-19 on everyday life

As well as the economic challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, stakeholders also spoke about mental health problems triggered or aggravated by lockdown. Stakeholders reported that some residents were scared and have not left home for three or four months. Older people, children and teenagers, and people dealing with existing vulnerabilities (including poverty, unemployment and homelessness) were flagged as the groups most significantly affected.

The research findings bring attention to the rapid changes that took place during the summer of 2020 as a result of COVID-19 restrictions and their impact on everyday life. Among these were reduced economic activity, people's changed perception of engaging with others outside their homes, the emergence of mutual aid groups, and access and awareness of council supports. One stakeholder noted that at the beginning of the summer "you could see [the impact on COVID-19] on the streets. Elephant & Castle became a desert." By August, however, things had changed again. Some traders spoke not only about the transformation of their business because of COVID-19 health protocols but also about structural changes in their business product. Likewise, for many residents finding employment post-lockdown has become more challenging not only because of a lack of jobs but also because community spaces where opportunities used to be advertised locally remained closed.

"A decision was made to change: the business changed because of the pandemic. Before, it used to be a restaurant where people could dance. Now, it is a minimarket where Latin products are sold. The change has been very positive so far." (trader)

"COVID-19 has certainly brought issues related to mental health and stress. [A] small survey of [registered residents] showed that there is a lot of anxiety, preoccupation, isolation, and that most do not have access to basic information because it is all in English. As such, many [of the registered residents] who try to watch the news in English do not really know what is happening around them. Likewise, the majority of them have lost their jobs." (stakeholder)

Both stakeholders and traders noted that the small shops in the Elephant & Castle area have been affected more than larger stores. Smaller shops have also faced difficulties changing to cashless payments and moving some of their business online. Overall, the uncertainty and lack of stability affected the local area at multiple scales: at the individual one through shops and residents, and at a community level by halting or limiting the activity of local groups.

"The fact that the shops in the E&C Shopping Centre closed meant that people were not where they used to, many times, spend their entire days. Likewise, people could not socialise anymore." (stakeholder)



OLD KENT ROAD

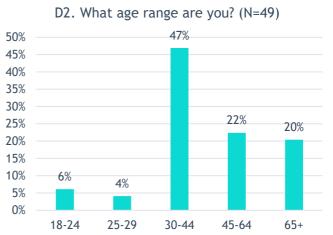
Who we spoke with

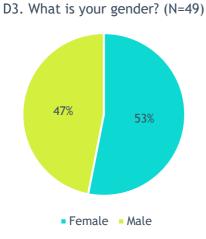
Stakeholders: 11 **in-depth interviews**, including interviews with five different TRAs, one local councillor, one local business director, one community organiser, a local researcher, a local park group, and a teacher.

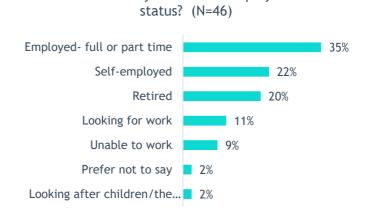
Traders: interviews with 13 traders (five were Black/British-owned businesses, three Black African, two White English, three White other), including the following types of businesses: a cafe, corner shop, computer repair shop, garage, party shop, brewery and event space, butchers, African grocery store, hair and nail salon, betting shop, and a clothes and accessories shop.

Local residents: walking ethnographies with four residents. **Street interviews** with 50 residents, demographics below.

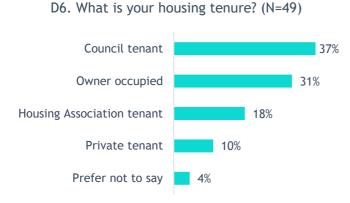


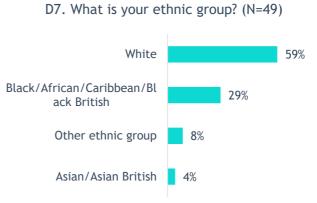






D4. What is your current employment





Community life and belonging was frequently described as the Old Kent Road's key strength by street interview respondents and stakeholders. For some of the residents, a sense of belonging was often linked to socioeconomic solidarity, and a pride in the history of the area as an industrial and working-class neighbourhood, and more recently as a gateway to London for newly arrived migrants. Those who reported not feeling they belonged pointed to perceptions of racism, crime, a recent decline in neighbourliness, lack of opportunities and spaces to connect, and a sense of hostility from the local regeneration.

"We're all pretty much the same, we're all poor." (resident)

Some reported that the spatial identity of the Old Kent Road has been improved in recent years by changing the name of Livesey Ward to Old Kent Road, and because the regeneration has encouraged some communities to define themselves as belonging to the area in order to participate. The six largest estates and their TRAs were commonly viewed as the cornerstones of community networks, alongside the large number of faith spaces, particularly for BAME groups.

"Had a church next door that was renting the top floor of a self-store. They were on a different planet as far as we were concerned, but loved having them there." (stakeholder)

High levels of ethnic diversity were often mentioned by residents as a strength, and occasionally as a source of tension. This tension was sometimes explained as because of the lack of opportunity for different ethnicities to interact and integrate, while others reported strong perceptions of racism, which they saw as being part of a longer, more complicated history. Millwall football club is sometimes connected to this racial conflict, particularly on match days; but some local residents see this as an outdated stereotype. Intergenerational conflict was also frequently mentioned, as well as the lack of support for 'invisible groups' such as the Latin, Eastern European and traveller communities.

Local change and control

In general, residents, stakeholders and traders did not believe that could they could have any impact on the regeneration. However, these same respondents would also frequently report being aware of opportunities to participate through consultations, and believed that the council were actively trying to engage with local residents. But although some reported positive experiences and outcomes through participation, usually those involved in TRAs, many others were cynical towards what it they achieve in the long term.

"[Have control?] No not really, I don't think you would anywhere. There's a very good TRA on this estate but beyond that, no. It'd be the same in all boroughs I imagine." (resident)

Views were strongly polarised about specific plans for regeneration. Some residents living further from regeneration sites welcomed the changes, believing that the area needing investment and improvement, whilst others who were more impacted by demolition and construction works could feel extremely threatened, perceiving the council was not providing enough support to them. Many smaller local traders viewed the regeneration negatively because of anticipated rents rises and declining footfall. This was particularly the case for renters, light-industrial land-uses and BAME-owned businesses, but less so for larger chain enterprises and free/leaseholders.

"When the regeneration starts to increase it's going to get worse. Cannot afford rents already, and there are already hardly any customers."; "We're beginning to feel like residual idiots." (trader)

Local residents also mentioned that the council has regularly been slow to respond to complaints and to deal with building repairs or anti-social behaviour. There was, however, a broad perception that council capacity was overstretched and underfunded.

A healthier life

Stakeholders and local residents frequently expressed the value of local green spaces as places to exercise, relax and socialise. However, many felt they were poorly maintained, and were frustrated by litter and fly tipping in

communal spaces and on the Old Kent Road itself. Some residents noted that they would like to see more frequent bin collections and maintenance of public spaces and streets, whilst others highlighted littering and fly tipping as instances of anti-social behaviour in the local community.

Traffic and pollution along the Old Kent Road were significant concerns for local residents. Some residents living closer to development sites voiced concerns about further pollution caused by growing population density in the future, as well as by construction. Local stakeholders reported high rates of respiratory health issues and asthma caused by air pollution, and feared this might worsen the effects of COVID-19. There was a general view that there has been issues with access to healthcare facilities in the neighbourhood, and that although the new Silverlock practice was an improvement, much more was needed.

Safety

Perceptions of safety ranged quite widely, with some believing the area had successfully moved on from a more violent past, whilst others - often local traders on the high-street - believed crime had worsened. Those who believed crime was not a significant issue for them usually said this was because they have a long-standing relationship with the community, and have a sense of where not to go and when. These same people would therefore believe newcomers could be at much more risk.

"Generally, it's a safe place, maybe unsafe for some, but it's fine for us as we know a lot of people." (resident)

The most frequent and strong concern, voiced by a wide range of respondents, was about the lack of supports and opportunities for young people in the local area coupled with a growing exposure and involvement with crime and anti-social behaviour. Fights over territory was seen as a common occurrence, between young people within the neighbourhood as well as outside.

"I feel safe - I grew up around chaos so I feel fine. If my eldest was out more I would be worried, but he's more focused on his books. The area is not safe generally and kids can be misguided so it's a concern." (resident)

Key spaces where people felt unsafe, usually at night, were generally outside shops, on the high street, on green spaces, courtyards and within some estates. This was usually related to drug dealing and loitering. A reduction in community policing was another also frequently cited, some wanted to see a greater police presence. A different safety concern was building maintenance, particularly of higher buildings and towers, learning from the Grenfell Tower tragedy, the Ledbury Estate was frequently mentioned in these discussions.

Local assets & challenges

Commonly cited strengths were the strong bus links along the Old Kent Road, particularly by older people who may have reduced mobility. Access to large supermarkets was also widely seen as positive by residents, however traders were more likely to see these as a challenge and difficult to compete against. Some however felt services such as banks, post offices or pharmacies were missing from the Old Kent Road, and hoped the regeneration would address this. The amount of social housing was widely praised, however there were concerns that these were not being well maintained, and that the regeneration would create to one- and two- bedroom homes rather than family units which were in much greater demand.

The green spaces, particularly Burgess Park, but also residential squares such as Leyton and Avondale Square were widely valued as key spaces to connect. However, many believed that traditional meeting spaces such as the pub and other night-time social spaces were declining. Some TRAs in the area seemed enthusiastic to take control of unused infrastructure like the Leyton Square Hub, and were willing to work more closely with the council in programming and operating these spaces.

The largest concern overall amongst residents, stakeholders and traders was the lack of activities, spaces and education and employment opportunities for young people. Some TRAs wanted more funding for older residents.

"If you live on an estate in a place like Southwark you don't get many chances in life, and if you miss the ones that you get, you're in trouble. Creating those opportunities is what needs to be the focus...and education." (stakeholder)

Impacts of COVID-19 on everyday life

Local stakeholders reported Old Kent Road as having one of the highest and earliest infection rates in the borough, linked to low standards of living and precarious employment. Many residents reported a stronger sense of community during the lockdown and afterwards, and a neighbourhood-wide mutual aid group that linked up all the TRAs and faith groups was seen as being effective in getting support to those who needed it. A number of TRA organisers felt empowered by the way the council had referred to them. However, they felt more support was still needed from the local council as well as the central government.

"The [area-wide] mutual aid group was a successful initiative. That was setup very quickly. From what I can see it's been able to respond really quite well to the immediate needs of people." (stakeholder)

Some local residents said they valued their local spaces more during lockdown, particularly the green spaces, and are now keen for more investment to expand play areas and install more facilities, as these can become overcrowded.

A large amount of concern about the impact of COVID-19 on everyday life was expressed by local traders. Some of the local shops reported increased business in the early stages of lockdown when more residents shopped locally. However, the majority of small businesses in the Old Kent Road area have been experiencing reduced customer numbers and more cautious spending habits in recent months. Many staff have been laid off, and there has been a reduction in informal employment of family and friends, and reduced opening hours, particularly in the hospitality sector. Many local traders were highly anxious about a second wave, and were unsure whether they would be able to survive the quieter winter months after having lost the busier summer trading period.

"The summer season is usually the busiest, but that has been lost due to coronavirus. Winter is usually much less business - so worried about this winter." (trader)



PECKHAM

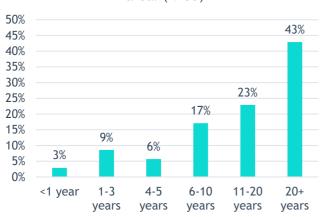
Who we spoke with

Stakeholders: 10 **in-depth interviews**, including a TRA, studio artist, church, local trader, mutual aid group, five local agencies/activists.

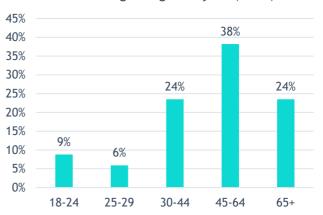
Traders: interviews with nine traders (two were Black/British-owned businesses, one Black African, one Black Caribbean, three White English, one White and Black, one Asian), including the following typologies: ethnic hairdressers, café, restaurant, beauty retail store, vape store, barbers, bike repair shops, clothing store.

Local residents: walking ethnographies with four residents. **Street interviews** with 35 residents, demographics below.

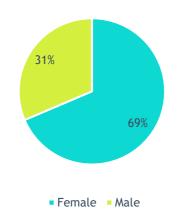
D1. How long have you lived in your local area? (N=35)



D2. What age range are you? (N=34)



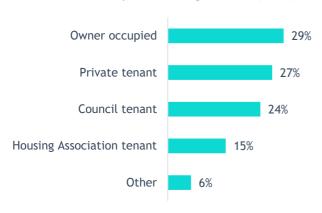
D3. What is your gender? (N=35)



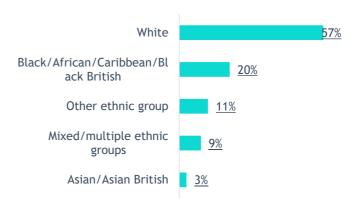
D4. What is your current employment status? (N=35)



D6. What is your housing tenure? (N=34)



D7. What is your ethnic group? (N=35)



Residents reported high levels of belonging to the local area, citing their local friendships, social networks, and satisfaction with the area as key reasons.

"Peckham is a place where there is a real sense of place which is so important in a big dehumanising city like London." (stakeholder)

The majority of residents interviewed have local connections with people they can turn to for help or support. Stakeholders underscored the importance of these social networks, highlighting that people with strong local social supports showed more resilience during the pandemic. However, rising housing costs are seen to be perpetuating the breakdown of family networks and stakeholders fear that social isolation and feelings of exclusion will increase as a direct result.

Residents generally reported that people from different backgrounds get on well together - the diversity and multiculturalism of the area are seen to support this. However, stakeholders also noted low levels of interaction between people from different backgrounds, with one local resident describing it as "harmonious coexistence".

"[Peckham has] relative parallel communities and economies that get on superficially well but occasionally differences between them cause problems...we're a constellation of really quite separate communities." (stakeholder)

Places of worship, particularly larger mainstream churches and mosques, were identified as important spaces for social mixing, while smaller churches, hair and beauty salons, shops and pubs were noted as important spaces for people from similar backgrounds to socialise. Stakeholders highlighted the lack of open access community spaces that could bring the community together, and that assets like Peckham Levels and Peckham Rye Park have untapped potential. Residents suggested more sports facilities like a basketball court, tennis courts and free wellbeing classes in the park, and more community events and activities to support broader participation in the area's arts and cultural spaces.

Local change and control

Residents and traders interviewed reported low levels of voice and influence in the area, the reasons for this were varied. Some residents were optimistic that they could have control if they became more involved. However, there is significant cynicism around consultation and the impact of local voices on the planning process. Some stakeholders and traders highlighted the need for a formal traders' forum, with a dedicated point of contact within the council, to address trader issues in a sustainable manner. Residents and traders responded to the pedestrianisation of Peckham Rye with a mixture of positive and negative sentiment. However, there was consensus that the decision was made without adequate public consultation and notice period.

"All we need is CONNECTION. We know the public are with us but we don't have the council on our side." (trader)

"When you make change, you have a bigger outcry from those who lost and not from those who gained." (resident)

There are strong activists and community groups locally, however stakeholders voiced concern that participation in community activism and the governance of voluntary groups is not representative of local demographics.

BAME groups and people with less resource (time and income) tend to be underrepresented.

"Being voluntary is exclusive because people who can get involved are people who can afford to give time for free." (stakeholder)

The arrival of the Overground was seen to be the biggest catalyst of area change. Developments with a social purpose, that have genuine community involvement, and improvements to the public realm are generally viewed positively. However, there are significant concerns about future proposed changes, particularly the impacts on housing affordability, local business makeup and rising income inequality. There is a desire to avoid negative consequences that would disproportionately affect or exclude more vulnerable residents and traders.

"The flood gates have opened to bad processes recently and prices escalated...some people are thrilled about the house price increases. Some people are alarmed, particularly those do don't own. They're being squeezed out." (stakeholder)

A healthier life

Local stakeholders reported that health disparities in Peckham are entangled with environmental determinants, as well as wider socio-economic issues, including ethnicity and deprivation. They draw links between the wide availability of cheap, unhealthy foods and childhood obesity. Stakeholders also noted that the quality of healthcare is varied and connected to the ability to self-advocate. Childcare costs, the lack of affordable after-school activities, overcrowding and flats without proper outdoor space were also identified as contributors to more sedentary, unhealthy lifestyles.

"Mental health in the borough is quite dramatic and is poverty driven...If don't see hope, mental health suffers. If you don't see a positive future, you lack hope and are depressed. This then triggers other issues and physical health issues. The psychological support is as important as medical interventions." (stakeholder)

Stakeholders reported the need for more culturally appropriate services, from mental health to employment.

"Accessing therapy services can be costly and lengthy...there is better support for people who can pay for it." (stakeholder)

Safety

The majority of residents interviewed reported feeling safe in the area. Long-term residents mentioned feeling safer now than in the past. However, some residents only feel safe during the day, and in certain areas, but not after dark. There are also concerns around young people's safety in relation to gang and knife crime. Stakeholders and residents link this to the reduced provision of youth services in the area, and the UK more widely. Knowing people locally - "familiarity" - and "eyes on the streets" were important to people's perception of increased public safety. Traders did not report major issues with local crime.

"Yeah, but I don't go out at night during the day, there's always lot of people sitting around and the area is well looked after - but not at night. I don't want any trouble." (resident)

Local assets and challenges

Local residents said that they value the area for its diversity and multiculturalism, its liveliness, its authenticity, transport connections, convenient access to other parts of London, the "friendliness" of the local community, as well as the wide range of local amenities from parks and green spaces, to sports facilities, independent shops, restaurants, bars, and cafes, cinemas, primary schools and libraries.

"Because Peckham was a run-down area socio-economically for a long time it has kept itself protected from the ravages of the wrong approaches of development. It's still very humane in terms of its building structures." (stakeholder)

Environmental issues such as litter, graffiti, fly tipping and uncleanliness, noise, pollution, traffic, and road construction were the most notable things residents dislike about Peckham. Crime, increasing house prices, loss of brand stores, and concerns about gentrification and its negative impacts on the existing community were also noted.

Stakeholders identified a lack of youth services and differences in quality between different secondary schools. The pandemic has also highlighted the digital divide and the need for more Wi-Fi hotspots and grants for young families to buy IT.

"There needs to be support for young people so they continue to be inspired and believe in things beyond their knowledge...Lack of money is a huge issue...Also a lack of ambition especially for younger people and positive role models. Education system isn't set up to meet their needs. How do you engage people when they can't see a positive route out of it?" (stakeholder)

Traders value Peckham for its access to a diverse group of customers, from the local area and further afield. The area is described as "vibrant and buzzing" but also "residential" and "relaxed". A few traders noted that it is a

place where small, independent businesses are supported. Traders noted a variety of actions which could make the place better to do business, including lower rents (and rent relief during COVID-19), help with advertising, reducing loitering outside shops (as its seen to scare off customers), additional parking areas and loading bays for deliveries, as well as clarity on social distancing protocols during the pandemic.

Impact of COVID-19 on everyday life

The research shows that the pandemic increased neighbourliness at hyper local levels in Peckham, with residents refocusing their time to their homes, neighbourhoods and local high streets. Online platforms and localised volunteering spurred new relationships between neighbours and became spaces of resource sharing, help, advice, and signposting. Stakeholders reported strong levels of solidarity within the community, and an outpouring of support through donations, volunteer hours, and new networks. Voluntary sector organisations, the council and health service teams built a level of partnership working that did not exist before.

However, impacts of the pandemic were unequally felt. Some residents experienced disproportionately negative effects, particularly older people, people with underlying health conditions, parents juggling childcare, work and homeschooling, and people in precarious living and employment situations. Stakeholders reported rising rates of evictions among private tenants, in contrast to social renters. The government's financial support programmes and the council's flexibility with tenants over rent arrears were seen as important safety nets.

Some businesses, particularly those deemed 'essential' during lockdown experienced surging profits this year, while others struggled with changing government regulations and reduced visitor footfall. Many community organisations faced challenges with the loss of face-to-face contact with their clients, and the existing digital divide became more apparent. Open access community spaces, which were highlighted as important for social mixing such as church halls and community centres, took longer to reopen than shops, restaurants and pubs, if they reopened at all.

"One thing [the area needs] is definitely spaces for the community to meet. This was a challenge anyway and COVID has made this more visible. Bars and pubs have managed to get up and COVID-secure because there is a profit motive (?), but many community centres and church halls have not...and bars, restaurants aren't suitable for certain religions." (stakeholder)

The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed and amplified the inequalities in the labour market, housing market, education system and how these issues play out in health disparities in Peckham. The pandemic has also raised awareness around food insecurity, social isolation, domestic violence and mental health issues, and the disproportionate toll they are having on BAME communities and those with no recourse to public funds.

Mutual aid groups and other informal community supports like street-level WhatsApp groups are legacies of lockdown. However, stakeholders brought up concerns around financial sustainability and community fatigue, as well as how to address increasing economic need in the community. There is growing awareness of more severe economic and social vulnerabilities on the horizon. Many community organisations and service-sector businesses expressed uncertainty about the future and concern about the challenges they face from evolving government guidelines and changing consumer behaviour.

"...the economic impacts now are really hitting and it's a conversation if the economic conditions were always there or [the pandemic] has just exposed it." (stakeholder)



WALWORTH

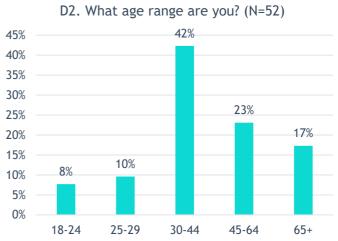
Who we spoke with

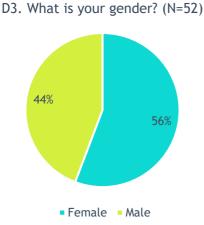
Stakeholder: nine **in-depth interviews**, including one TRA group interview, two youth/children agencies, four local agencies/activists, one police, one school.

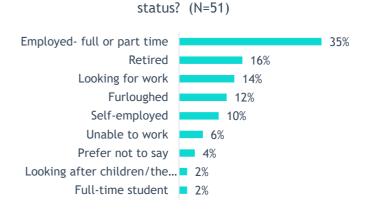
Traders: interviews with six traders (one was Black/British-owned businesses, three White English, one Other ethnic, one White-Cypriot), including the following types of businesses: electrical goods, shoe shop, ethnic supermarket, beauty, jeweller, shoe repairs.

Local residents: walking ethnographies with 4 residents. **Street interviews** with 52 residents, demographics as follows:

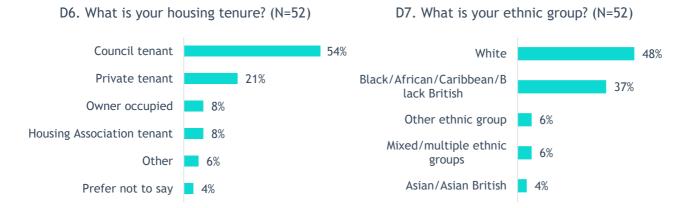








D4. What is your current employment



Most residents feel attached to Walworth, often this is because they have grown up in the area or are long-term residents, however many new to the area report that it has become home.

"Yes, my accent sometime shows I'm not local but this is home to me." (resident)

Walworth's identity can be overwhelmed by Elephant & Castle, or by individual estate identities, like the Brandon Estate or the Kinglake Estate. East Walworth was described as being made up of "little islands", being more fragmented and "cellular" in its geography and layout than west Walworth. East Walworth is characterised by large scale regeneration at Elephant Park and the Aylesbury Estate, however west Walworth has seen little neighbourhood change.

Many residents value the diversity of the area, and experience it as a place where people from different backgrounds are accepted and get on. The accessibility of Latin culture - the music, dancing, football and restaurants - were described as facilitating relationships with people from other backgrounds. Some tensions between groups were highlighted, particularly around social class and the people moving into the area into new developments. A stakeholder described how new arrivals tend to be white, while the dominant group in the area is black African. There were suggestions of differences between older and younger people, and, on the Aylesbury Estate between people in temporary accommodation and people with secure tenancies and leaseholders. A wish was articulated for more groups and venues that bring together people from different backgrounds.

"It's multicultural but people don't mix. When we were younger communities came together. The area is changing and they are moving in more and more ... Homeless people, drug users, and people from different religions and people who can't afford to live here anymore have a more difficult time." (resident)

"For me the main difference is around money. Those who have tend to me the ones moving into the area and can afford the nice restaurants and cafes but I think that they are too expensive for local people." (resident)

Many residents have family locally, or have created local friendship groups, though some were more isolated. Faith organisations, gardening groups and networks, and relationships based around through children were cited as ways that people get to know each other.

"I'm lucky, I have family, friends & good neighbours. Mostly, it's from living here over the years. ...I'm involved with my church and through that I have a strong support network." (resident)

Local change and control

Residents interviewed generally felt they had little influence over their local area. When asked "Do you feel you have control?", one person responded "not really - maybe getting more involved in the community would help but there is not much opportunity for people to get involved." Another: "No - I'm black. I can voice my opinions but who listens and where do they go?".

There has been a history of significant activism and protest about change across the area. One stakeholder described one of Walworth's assets as "how awkward everyone is", how people react strongly to changes they do not like. Formal spaces like tenants halls, and informal spaces, are important. Burgess Park was described as including places where Nigerians, Chinese and Ecuadorians gather and talk to each other about mutual solidarity efforts, finding jobs or simply to socialise.

Attitudes towards regeneration often focus on the redevelopment of the Heygate Estate and Elephant and Castle. This coexists with a perception that the area has changed little, particularly around Walworth Road, and in west Walworth where the high proportion of council homes limit potential for redevelopment. However, across Walworth, stakeholders and residents described more affluent people moving into the area. Opinions about the new housing polarise feelings.

"I didn't like it at first, I lived in the houses that were demolished and I didn't understand why and what was happening, but now I understand it and now I'm ok with it. I've seen people demonstrate about regeneration but no one listens." (resident)

"if the area becomes homogenous it would be a real shame as it would become the same as everywhere else in London and currently it's so unique." (resident)

Residents living in regeneration areas described different experiences. Some are very much looking forward to being rehoused, others are anxious about where they are going to go, once their block has been knocked down. Others are, according to a stakeholder, "disillusioned - asking is it really going to happen?". An important aspect of change has been increases in housing costs - to rent or to buy. One stakeholder described how people living in the area feel stuck and cannot afford to move. One impact could be increased polarisation between council estates and private homes.

"People and facilities are changing around them that are economically and culturally not the same." (stakeholder)

There were some criticisms of the council, about slow feedback from consultation, and the approach to maintenance and regeneration. Feelings ran high about the recent road closures. Most residents interviewed did not object to these, however traders on Walworth Road and some activists felt this to be an impediment to their daily life and businesses, introduced with little consultation. The police were mentioned alongside the council as institutions which residents felt they had no control over.

"Don't alter my space without asking me ... They used lockdown as an excuse." (stakeholder)

A healthier life

Walworth is characterised by a series of small green parks and public spaces, and these contribute to quality of life and make the area walkable. Stakeholders reported that there is evidence that far more people walk to shops on Walworth Rd than in other Southwark town centres.

Stakeholders stated that Walworth was an early COVID-19 hotspot in early and mid-March 2020. Lack of testing meant there was no good data about the extent of infection, GPs struggled and many residents became nervous about leaving their homes. By Summer 2020 some households - including families and people living alone - were reported to still be staying inside, with an impact on physical and mental health. There are concerns that "behind closed doors there are concerning issues bubbling up... Domestic violence is off the scale".

Levels of anxiety have increased because of fears of illness, tense and difficult living situations through lockdown, about financial insecurity and about the future loss of employment as furloughing ends. Anxiety and stress are also linked to the experience of living in an area where regeneration timetables and processes are unclear. On the Aylesbury Estate, the impact of decanting, and housing people in temporary tenancies, has put some vulnerable households in poor quality housing in blocks with few neighbours, vulnerable to exploitation. The impact of change and the eradication of longstanding street patterns can be disorientating, particularly for both older people and younger people.

Safety

The majority of residents interviewed, and stakeholders, felt that overall the area is safe. However, many described pockets of crime and anti-social behaviour. Safety was mentioned more often as a problem in the east of the area than in the west, although problems were mentioned on the Pullens Estate because of the open stairwells, and the legacy of a stabbing on the Newington Estate that hung over local young people for several years. Various locations were described for different reasons: the Brandon Estate, associated with particular gangs; Walworth Road around Bagel King; Burgess Park. Gang activity was described as coming "in waves".

"It's a safe place, if anyone comes onto the estate there are eyes on them" (stakeholder)

On the Aylesbury Estate, there were increased concerns about drug taking and safety for the small number of existing residents on the upper floors of Wendover and Taplow. One stakeholder described how people are "afraid to walk about because they come across people who are defecating and injecting."

For young people, and especially BAME residents, stop and search was an important issue. One stakeholder noted, "When a policeman comes up to you and talks to you like you are an adult and you are only 14 years old it is scary".

Local assets and challenges

The assets of the area that were most often mentioned were the transport connections, the walkability, the green spaces, the shops and local traders, and the strong local community organisations.

"You can buy any kind of food and it is very cheap. Everything is local, you don't need to travel. There's Caribbean and African shops that are local and have spices...If you don't have a lot of money, it's cheap." (resident)

Walworth's council estates and associated green spaces are generally seen as strong assets of the area, providing housing and stability. The Aylesbury Estate, and to a lesser estate the Kinglake Estate, were seen differently because of disrepair. The area was described as having been more affordable in the past (relative to other parts of London), and as a place where the cost of living is still relatively cheap. One interviewee described the decision to move to the area: "we looked at what was most affordable and closest to the centre, which is Walworth." However, there are now concerns about affordability and redevelopment. Regeneration and demographic change are leading to increased churn, this is most pronounced in east Walworth. Growing numbers of street homeless people, often visible around Walworth Road, are of concern to many.

Walworth Road with its local shops was often mentioned as an asset, traders described how they stepped up during the lockdown to offer meals and deliveries. Rents on Walworth Road are cheaper than other areas which gives people opportunities to open businesses, this has bought Korean and Lebanese restaurants to the area. However, there are fears that demographic change is removing customers for many longstanding jobs. Walworth's working-class history, and its multicultural traditions were often referenced together, including shops like Baldwins on Walworth Road, and the area's many pubs. East Street Market has changed but continues to support both diverse and longstanding white populations.

"Walworth is a hidden gem. People go to Brixton or Elephant & Castle, but people don't know about Walworth. It's quiet too." (resident)

Impact of COVID-19 on everyday life

Stakeholders described how the initial shock meant that everyone "was in the same boat". They described how lockdown levelled access to the area's assets, particularly the parks. Financial difficulties and disruption were harsh for many, some people found themselves newly vulnerable - Uber drivers lost all their income, childminders, people in retail, food, restaurants lost work. There were delays before benefit support kicked in.

"Most issues were solvable. But not mental health, this had a different timeline." (stakeholder)

For people living in the extreme poverty, "lockdown shone a light on what was already there", affording to one stakeholder, describing how the people given hot food during lockdown were the same families that the agency supported before March.

"Everyone was skint and hungry before, now people have noticed." (stakeholder)

Residents described how, after lockdown, people seemed friendlier, and kind, and how they came together to offer support. Another interviewee reported that appreciation of nature and the area's green assets had increased. The youth agency described how young people seemed to be gentler with each other, as a result of spending more time around family, and how removing the stress of school had been a great relief for some.

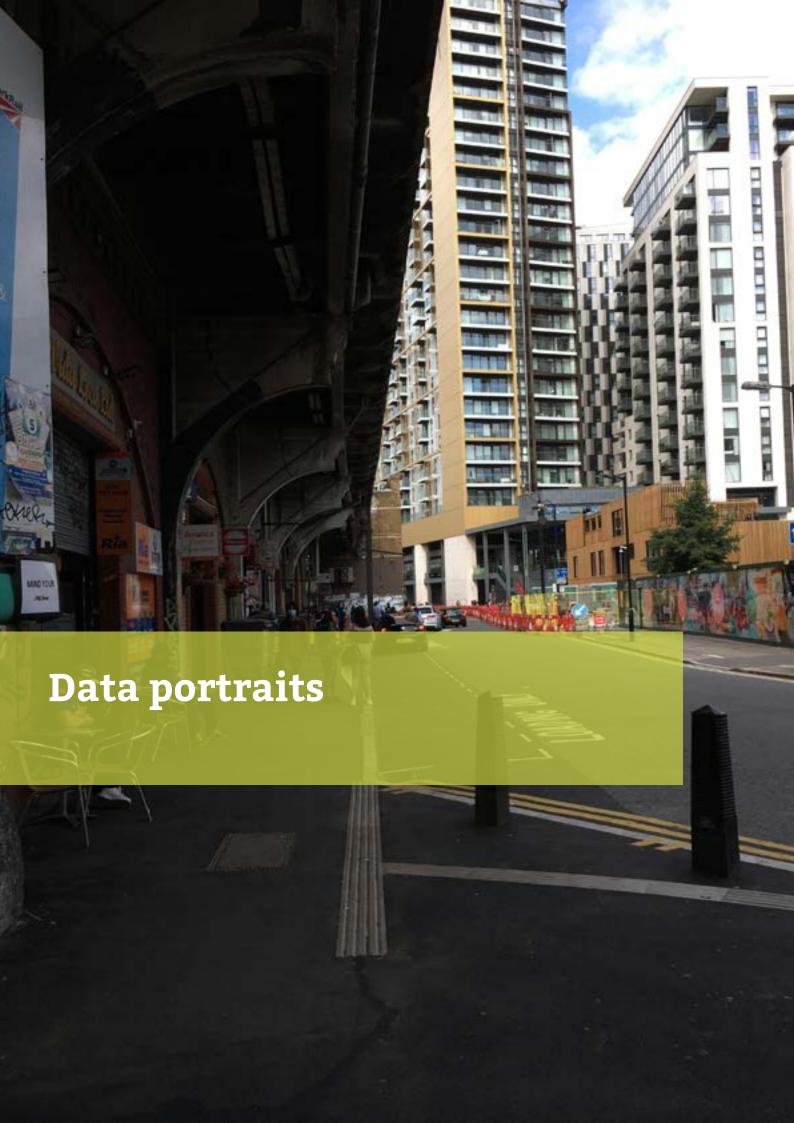
There were concerns about the number of people still not leaving home. This includes people who are more inward looking, some who don't speak English well. Some families, because of their history of arrival in the UK were concerned about breaking rules, the prospect being stopped by police in parks bought back memories of difficult past times. After the end of lockdown, children that had stayed indoors during COVID went out to the parks, young adults started drinking and socialising. Use of public space changed as restrictions eased. The Brandon estate, with its large grass area next to Kennington Park, became the scene of BBQs and parties, often for people from other areas. "It has become a place for raves and parties". Police described an increase in complaints about noise.

Traders described making efforts to support communities and stay open, several mentioned how busy they were immediately after lockdown eased. Others described extreme financial pressures.

"A lot of people have a gambling addiction in area, but over lockdown betting shops were shut. This benefitted us and local people as people have more money." (trader)

Response showed strength of local agencies relationships, including with funders. Local agencies were praised for their response.

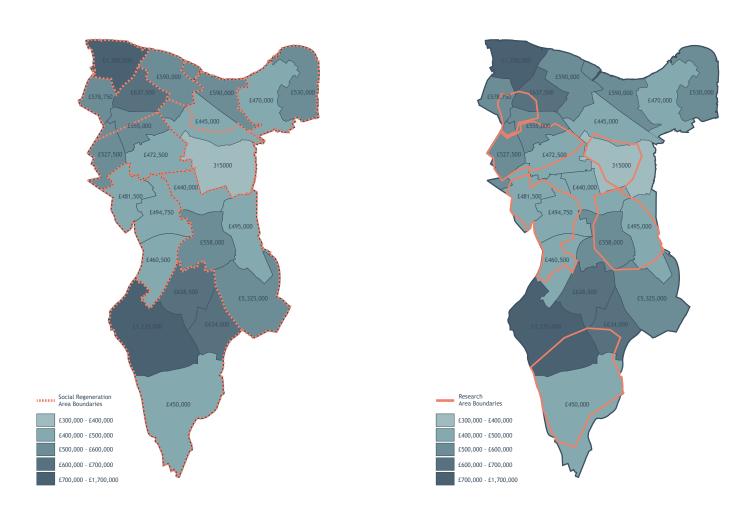
"If we hadn't had these links at the beginning of lockdown, we would have been scrabbing around ... by end of the week preceding lockdown we had supports in place to support our vulnerable families". (stakeholder)

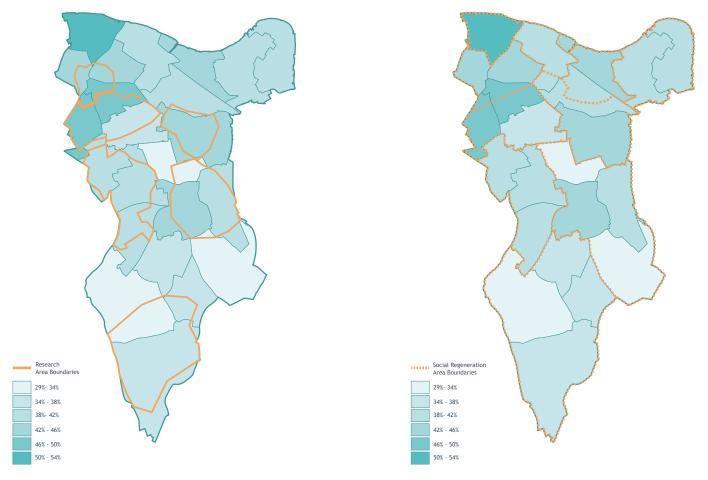


Introduction

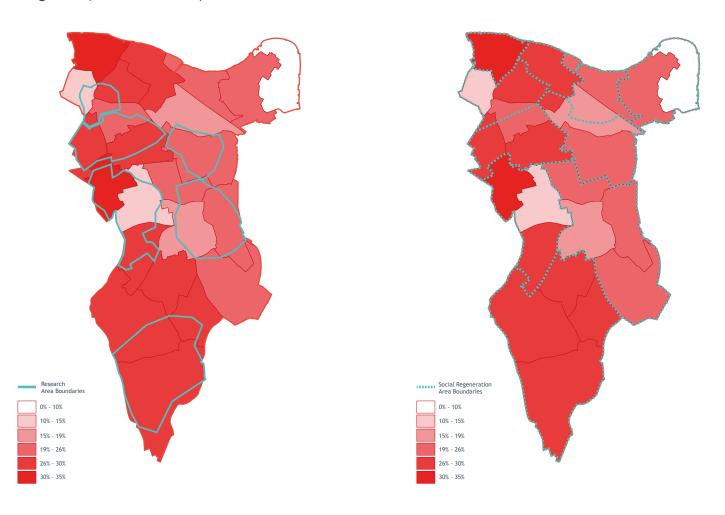
This appendix brings together a series of data portraits of the six regeneration areas. This secondary data is presented at either the ward or output area geography level for all of Southwark, with the research area boundary overlaid, facilitating comparisons across areas. The first map is the median house price per ward, followed by a map showing Public Health England data on elderly isolation, incidence of disability, and child health and development. The second set of maps cover the 10 IMD measures. The final set of maps present 10 indicators from Social Life's Community Dynamics data.

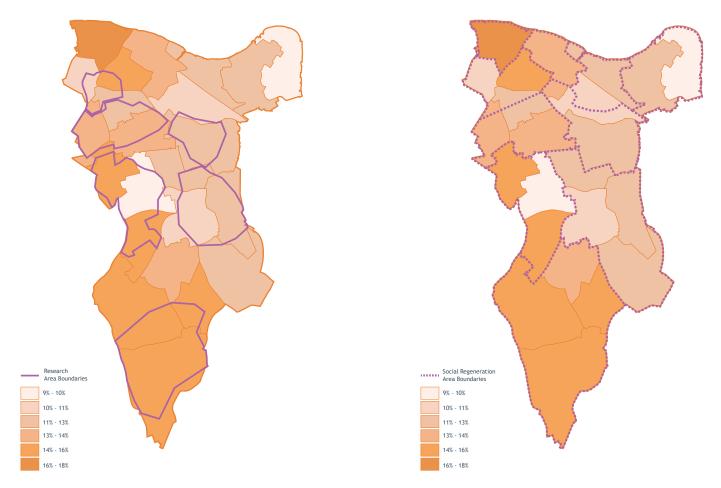
Median house prices by ward (ONS, HPSSA dataset 37, July 2020)



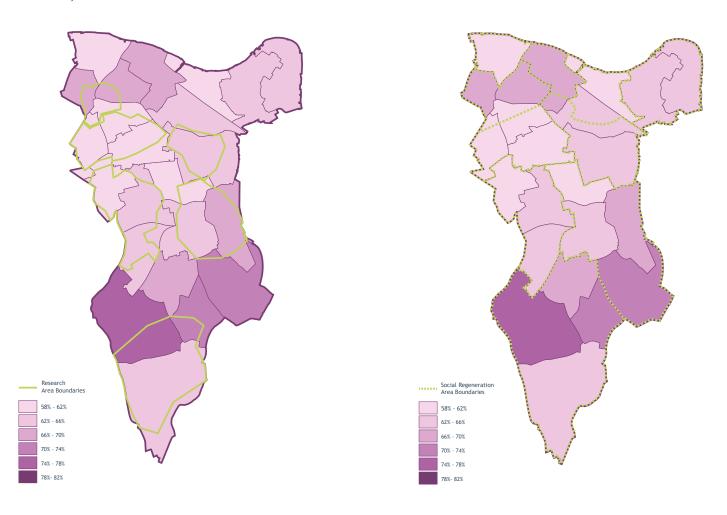


Percentage of obese children in year 6, three-year average (NHS Digital, National Child Measurement Programme, 2015/16 - 17/18)



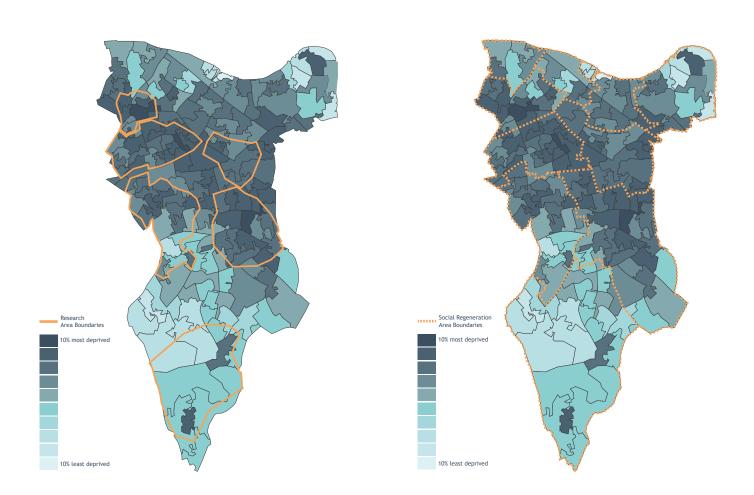


Percentage of children aged 5 at educational development target (Department for Education, EYFS Profile, 2013-14)

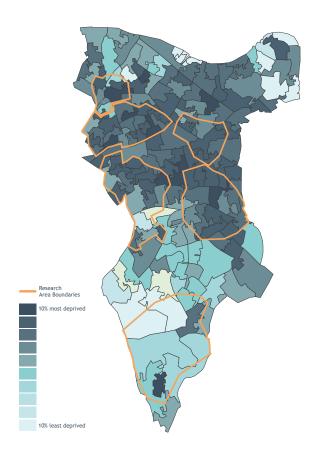


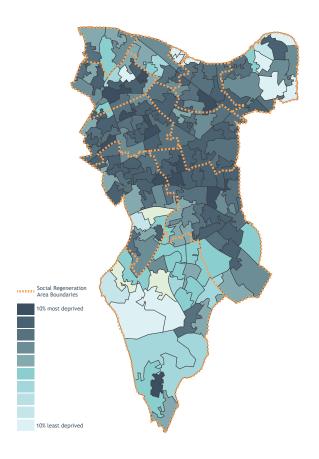
Index of Multiple Deprivation scores

Index of Multiple Deprivation (2019)

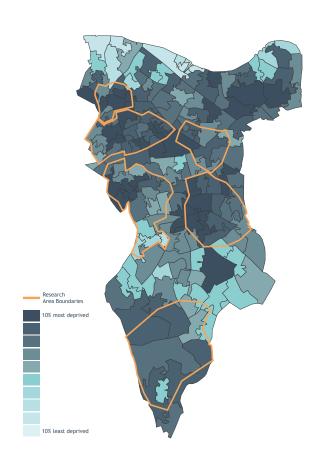


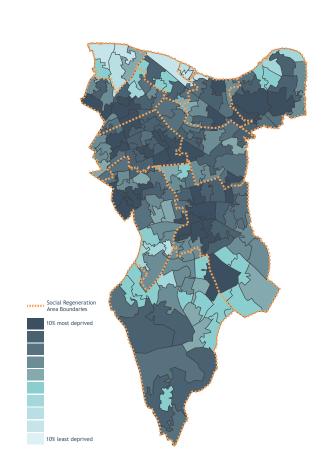
Income Deprivation Domain (2019)



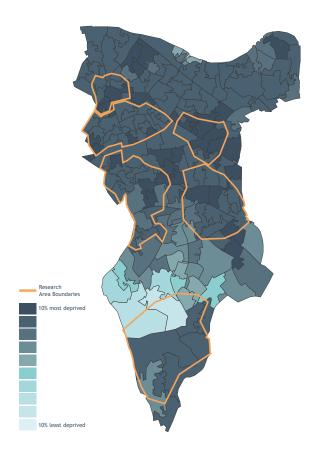


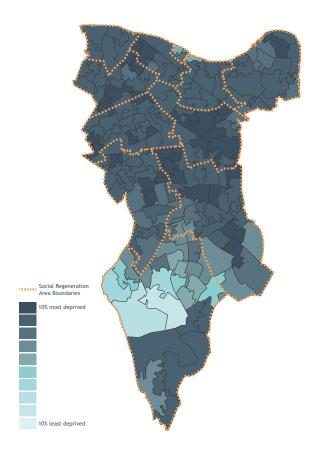
Crime Domain (2019)



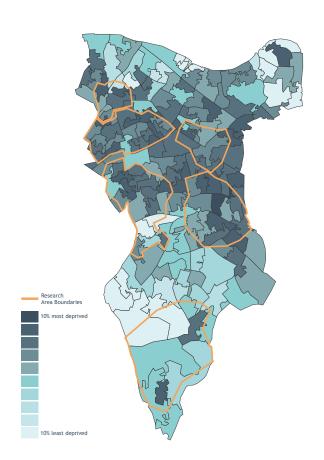


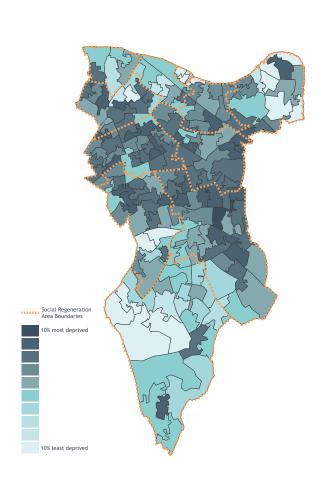
Barriers to Housing and Services Domain (2019)



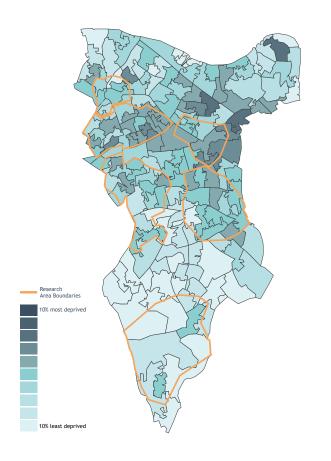


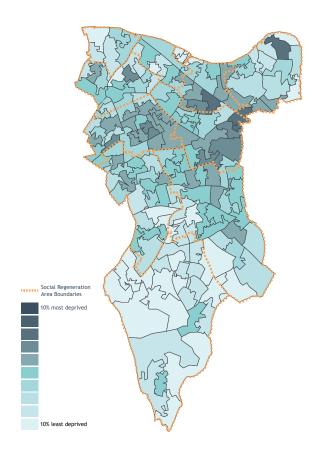
Employment Deprivation Domain (2019)



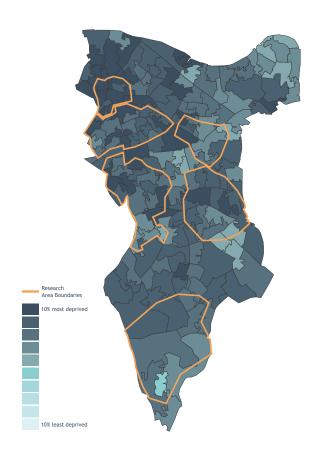


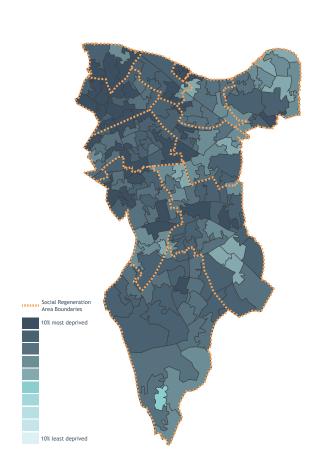
Education, Skills and Training Domain (2019)



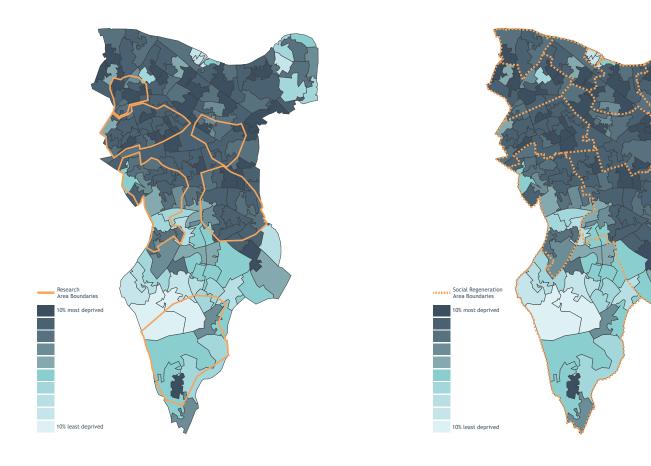


Living Environment Deprivation Domain (2019)

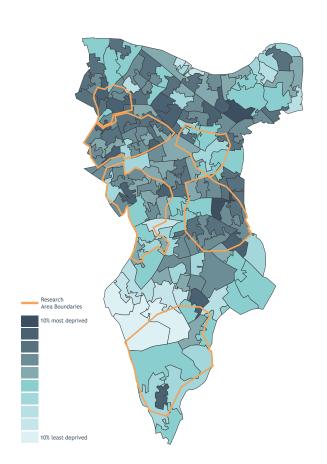


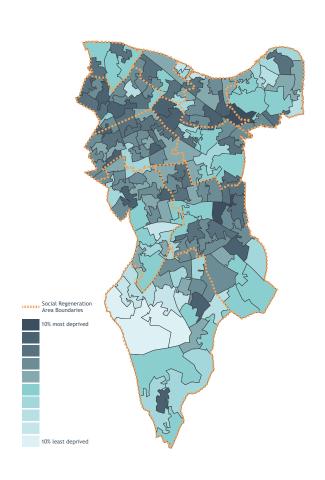


Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (2019)

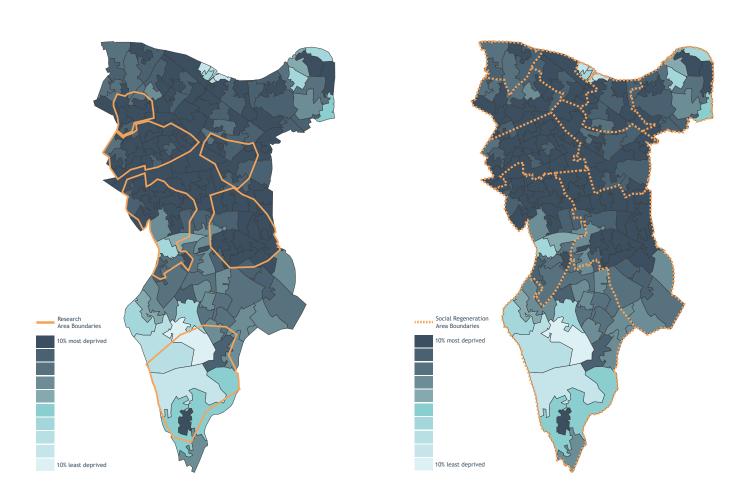


Health Deprivation and Disability Domain (2019)





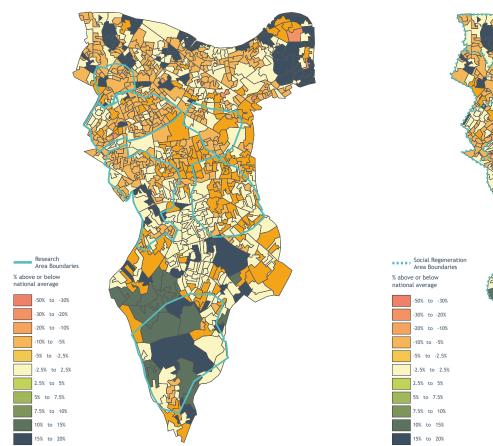
Income Deprivation Affecting Older People Index (2019)

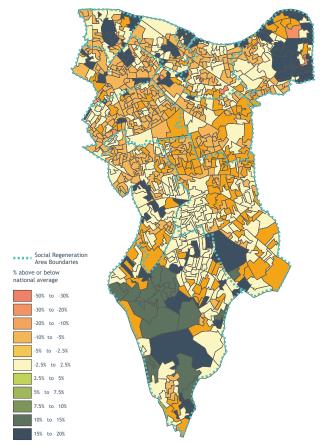


Comparisons with national data

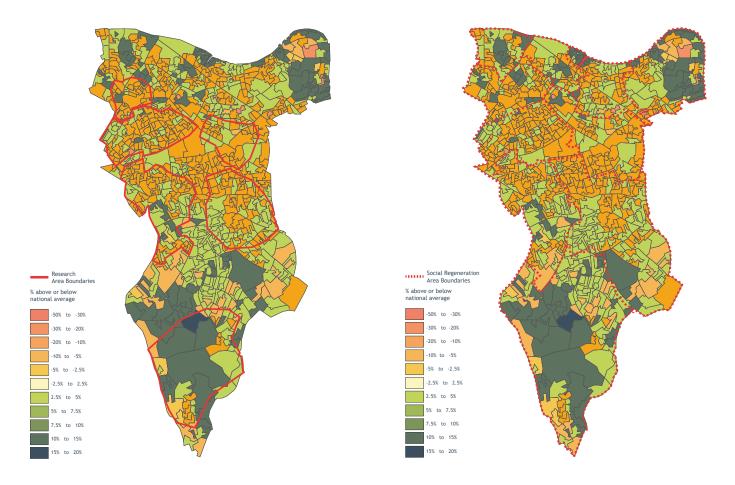
Social Life's Community Dynamics data give us another way to understand differences between the six areas included in the first phase of the research. These indicators use national data (for example from the Understanding Society Survey) and ONS output area classifications (OACs) to generate predictions about how respondents living in a particular local area feel about safety, their sense of belonging, satisfaction with life, among other things.

Trust in people living in neighbourhood (Social Life 2020)

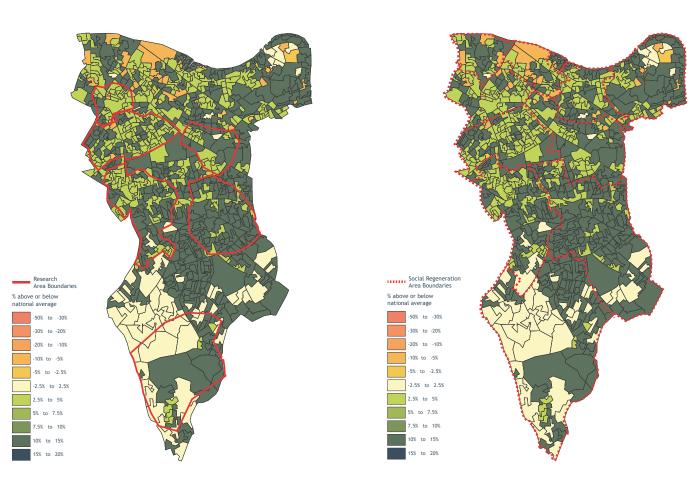




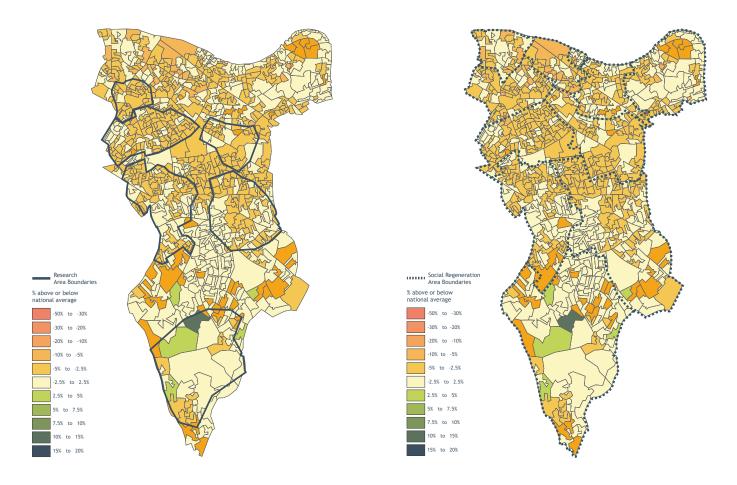
Trust in people in general (Social Life 2020)



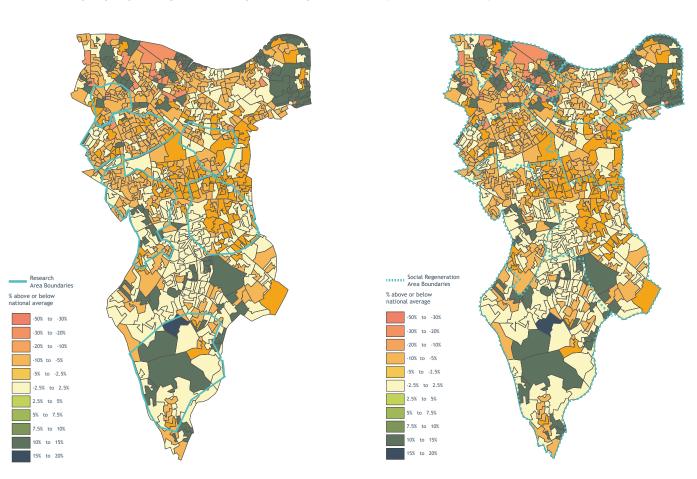
Agreement that you can influence decisions affecting your local area (Social Life 2020)



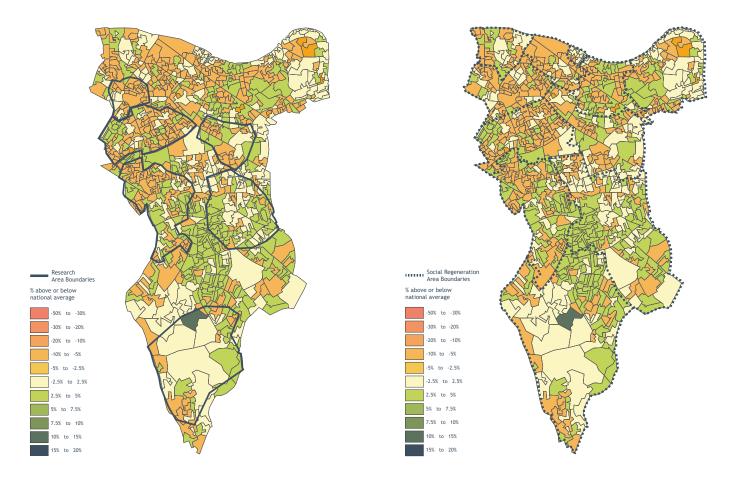
Belong to neighbourhood (Social Life 2020)



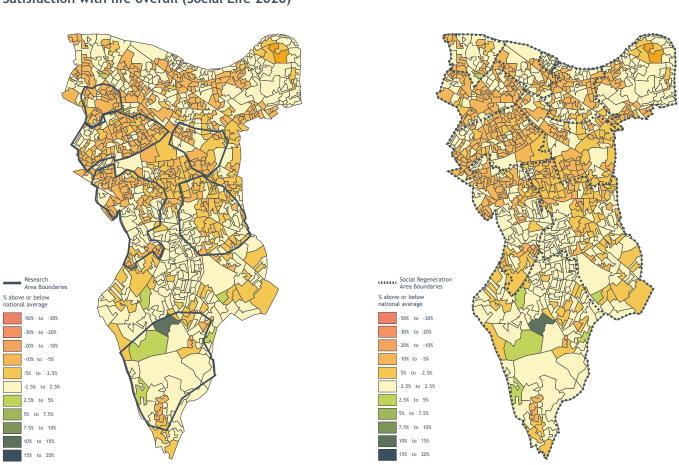
Belief that people pull together to improve neighbourhood (Social Life 2020)



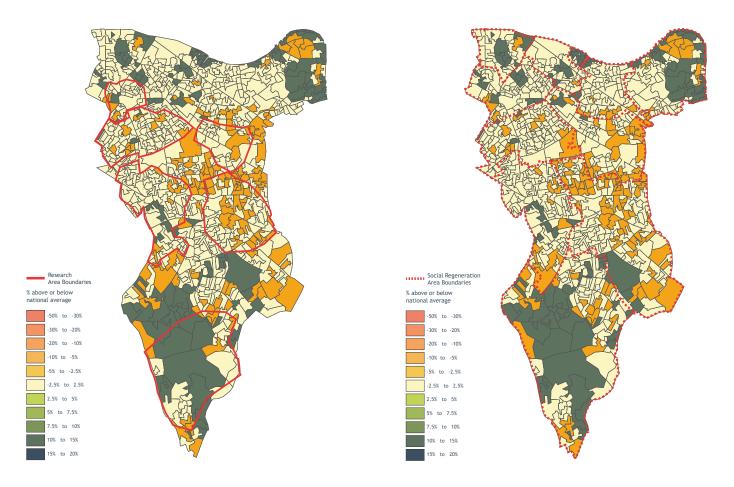
People are willing to improve neighbourhood (Social Life 2020)



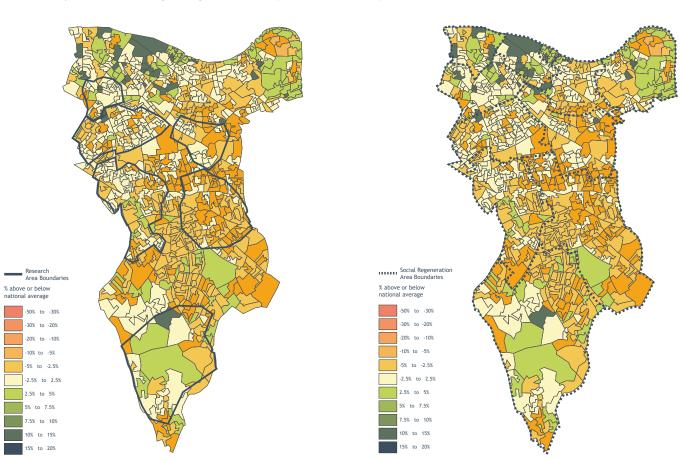
Satisfaction with life overall (Social Life 2020)



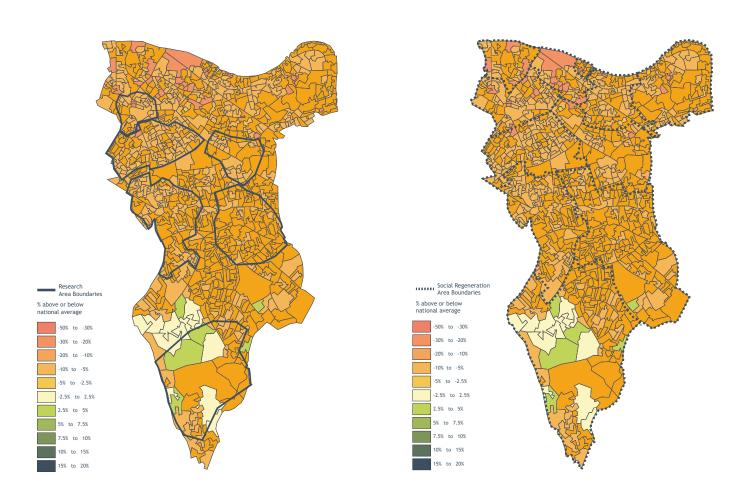
Satisfaction with local area as a place to live (Social Life 2020)



How safe you feel walking along after dark (Social Life 2020)



How regularly you talk with neighbours (Social Life 2020)



About Social Life

Social Life is an indepdent research organisation created by the Young Foundation in 2012, to become a specialist centre of research and innovation about the social life of communities. Our work is about understanding how peoples' day-to-day experience of local places is shaped by the built environment - housing, public spaces, parks and local high streets - and how change, through regeneration, new development or small improvements to public spaces, affects the social fabric, opportunities and wellbeing of local areas.

www.social-life.co

Report commissioned by Southwark Council Published October 2020.

