

blue ribbon Foundation



DOWNHAM MENS GROUP Social Programme Report

April 2023 to December 2023

blue ribbon Foundation

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blue ribbon Foundation

The Blue Ribbon Foundation aim is to target men and to provide a local outlet in which to meet and develop companionship, with a longer-term view to helping improve their health and wellbeing.

We were drawn to work in Downham, which has both a SE6 & BR1 postcode, by local health information and our own research which identified that Downham men are at risk of being left behind by British society.

High unemployment, poor health, age and limited prospects render it difficult to motivate them to look after their health, or to take up opportunities for the benefit and wellbeing of themselves, their families or their communities.

We had two major outcomes for our work in Downham:

- Reduce isolation and improve male health and wellbeing.
- To build a stronger Downham community.



Summary of Downham Men's Group outcomes

The Blue Ribbon Foundation has developed a men's group in Downham in south Lewisham.

During 2023 the funding for our project came from three major sources:

The Lee Charity of William Hatcliffe funding.

London Catalyst

The Blue Ribbon Foundation

Thanks to funding The Blue Ribbon Foundation were able to support a part time self-employed coordinator, Trevor Pybus.

Our programme was designed to identify and engage with people who are socially isolated, including the 10% of residents in the target wards who are over the age of 64 and the 19.8% people in the Lewisham population with common mental health problems. The goal is to develop a Men shed type project but to inspire those men to engage constructively in various outreach and cultural projects which benefit the local community. The project was created to help men affected by poor mental health, family breakdowns and lack of support networks can find a *safe place* to talk through their issues/problems and empower men to take responsibility for their health through the work it undertakes.

We know that the Social programme was badly affected by COVID 19 pandemic, as for nearly two years we had to limit membership to a maximum of 6 men. Our regular session time is:

Tuesday 10 – 1pm

Highlights include, completing painting the disabled loo and starting the process of refurbishing the inner courtyard

During 2023 we have worked with Sevenfields PCN on a research programme at the London Metropolitan Archive (LMA) to explore the history of Downham. These sessions were held on a Thursday morning so that we could continue with the regular Tuesday session.

We have also developed a monthly Environmental plan with Thames 21 in Beckenham Place Park to help with the River Ravensbourne.

We also continued to support the Downham Remembrance. During early November we had a session where we planned to weed around the stone. DMG's also bring along our Public Address system and help steward the event.



Programme of work

Our main session is held Tuesday Morning 10 – 1pm.

We have also delivered extra sessions including outreach programme, the Downham Remembrance Service Armistice service and attending London Metropolitan Archive (LMA) to explore the history of Downham.

Facebook

We regularly publish our sessions with pictures through our Downham Men's Facebook page.

Our registration and regular attendance is quite stable but needs to be improved. We started the new year with a database of 16 and although we have had a at least 5 new members we still continue to have a database of 16.

- 7 members are 60 plus
- 5 members have disclosed mental health issue

During 2023 we receive referrals from Sevenfields Primary Care Network, Community Connections, Phoenix Community Housing and South London and Maudsley Trust.

Tea – (very important)!

We start the session with tea and a chat, we check what we are doing in the session. Around 11.00 we have another break and chat. This time is very important as it offers members the opportunity, to take this opportunity to achieve the 'unwritten' objective of getting the men talking about themselves, networking, supporting one another, what they are doing away from the meetings and discussing how they feel.

Training

22 May 2023

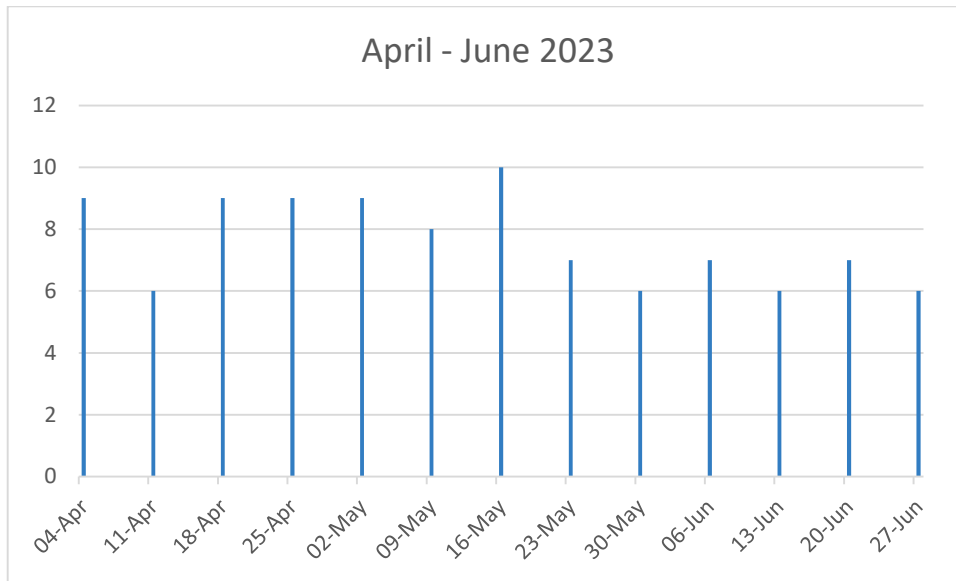
Mental Health First Aid one-day certificate via Sevenfields PCN

13 June 2023

Busting Prostate Cancer Myths Webinar



Goldsmiths Community Centre programme



Tuesday 4 April. One of the members donated roofing felt for the shed.



11 April Painted Goldsmiths toilets



During the April session we continued to prepare the Goldsmiths Garden. We used the space in the inner courtyard to prepare seeds to plant out.



We continue to build our shed, using the funding from Selco to buy the boards for the roof.

London Metropolitan Archive (LMA)

Exploring the history of Downham.



These sessions were held on a Thursday Morning. Sevenfields PCN community links worker lead the sessions.

To ensure that we got full value of our TFL travel cards we left Grove Park Railway station at 10am and went to London Bridge. At London Bridge we would get the Thameslink to Farrington Road. We would walk up to the London Metropolitan Archive. The idea was to research and back information to celebrate the 100 years of Downham in 2025.



13-April
6

20 April
3

27 April
3

3 May
4

10 May
3

17 May
3

We were able to research the Downham Subsidy register to find out that the first homes in Downham were completed on the 16 February 1925.

One of our member got his grandchild, Karma O'Mahoney to write The Story of a Model Tenant from information discovered at the London Metropolitan Archives by Richard O'Mahoney.

In May we complete the erection of the Downham Men's Group shed. One of our members donated the paint for the shed. The space gives us more storage and working space for the group.



In May, we also completed the painting of the disabled toilet

Originally all the walls were white. The blue paint allows those with poor sight to easily see their way around loo

For the past three summers we have been planning to tidy up the benches outside the small hall, today a small team took the first step - they cleaned years of dirt and paint from one of the benches.

Using funding from the Selco Community Heroes programme another team fixed some of the problems with the gutter in the inner courtyard.

And yet another team continued to plant out the Goldsmiths Community Centre allotment space.

We also got to speak to Catarina from Thames 21 about the plans for the Eastern part of Beckenham Place Park and how Downham Men's Group can help in the park.

And we also got to drink some tea and chat during the session.



Phoenix Consultation

On the 5 May Phoenix Community Housing came to consult with the Downham Men's Group. They were trying to find an answer to why Men do not participate in social group and especially in their organisation.



As part of the agreement the Downham Men's Group we asked Phoenix to agree to our **Consultation protocols**

If you wish to consult with the DMG you will need:

- Understand that our sessions run between 10 – 1pm.
We recommended that consultation take no longer than 1 hour, therefore the best time would be between 12pm and 1pm
- If possible, make a donation to the Blue Ribbon Foundation for the session.
- At a minimum we expect to be feed and watered for the consultation.
- Contact Goldsmiths Community Centre and book a room/space for the meeting:
bookings@goldsmithscommunitycentre.org.uk
Please note: Goldsmiths Community Centre will not provide free space for third parties wishing to consult groups, room hire needs to be built into the consultation costs.
- Understand that you are consulting with DMG as a group, we will not be undertaking any one to one consultations within our session.
- At least 2 weeks before the consultation send us a brief on your project, which will include where and when the results of the consultation will be published.
- If you are using a questionnaire supply us the questionnaire at least 1 week before the consultation.
- After the consultation we expect a copy of the notes of the session, which we will need to agree/amend before they are published.



Alan Till
1934 – 2023

Alan was the Chair of Goldsmiths Community Centre when the Blue Ribbon Foundation were in the process of developing the Downham Men's Group



In June our programme was very much about ensuring that the garden outside the George Green Hall looked its best.



Alan Till life celebrations were to be held at the centre and we asked to tidy up the garden.

Alan Till was just great guy, someone who would always pitch in.



There was never a fuss with Alan

We were happy to help.

What is going well?

This period was really successful for completing tasks and starting new tasks.

We completing painting the disabled loo, completing the shed and starting the process of refurbishing the inner courtyard

We also got to undertake extra sessions with Sevenfields PCN on a research programme at the London Metropolitan Archive (LMA) to explore the history of Downham. These sessions were held on a Thursday morning so that we could continue with the regular Tuesday session.

The garden just looks so much better. We used the inner courtyard to start our seedling and through this were able to produce crops.

As a group we are really starting to support each other.

What is going not so well?

The Phoenix Consultation was really interesting but we still await the outcome of the consultation.

The social programme was a bit stalled as we were awaiting confirmation that we could build the Wellbeing area in the courtyard.

Any challenges faced/overcome?

We were part of Selco Community funding and were given £500 to help build the inner courtyard, there was the possibility that we could have received another £1500 but we could not get enough votes.

We also put unsuccessful applications to:

The Fore
The Co-op
Hedley Trust

Whether attendance is in line with expectation?

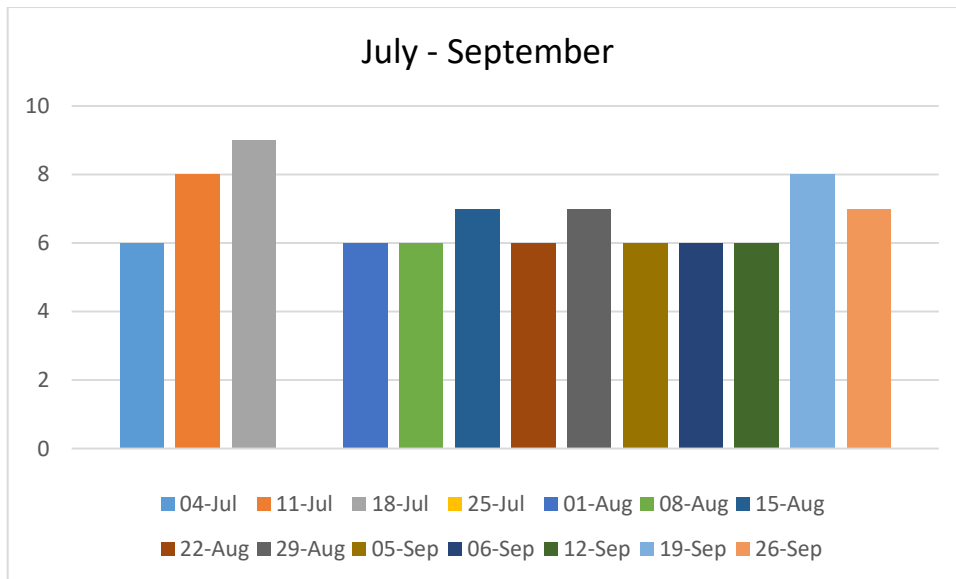
Although the numbers are not as good as I expected, we have built up an excellent core group. I still look to expect 9 or 10 to be the current norm.

Actively trying to increase numbers?

Saturday 17 June Sevenfields PCN delivered a Health Marquee as part of Downham Celebrate.

Downham Men's Group also brought along a pub sign from the old Downham Tavern, along with pictures, newspaper articles and a fact sheet about 1920's Downham.





During the Downham Celebrates event, Saturday 17 June, the Downham Smoothie bike had a major malfunction. DMG's came to the rescue and repaired the bike.



In July we had a visit from Lewisham Local. One of the outcomes of that meeting was that members of Downham Men's Group received Lewisham Local cards. In the following weeks the garden at Goldsmiths was beginning to take shape and produce flowers and vegetables.

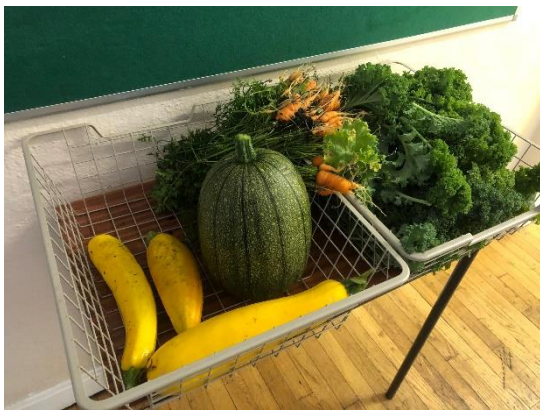
Our members have lots of things going on in their lives, but even thinking about them makes me smile. In late July we had a potential new member, who has real drive and ambitions for the group. It will be excellent if he comes again.

In early July the Sun decided to take a holiday and the DMG's had to change our plans.

We did however produce the first crops which included Rhubarb, courgettes and carrots.

We also grew some Sunflowers! On the Downham Men's Group Facebook page we invited the community to see the Sunflowers.

We also cut the grass and moved the compost about. And more importantly we had some extended tea breaks.



The weather(rain) meant that we could not continue with the painting the benches.

Our focus turned to the inner courtyard. We started to rub down one of the doors.

We are still wanting help with a design plan for the inner courtyard, and asked the community for their help.

At most sessions get to be thankful for all those Men who have been part of the DMG, they have always made a difference.

Where there is Tea there is hope

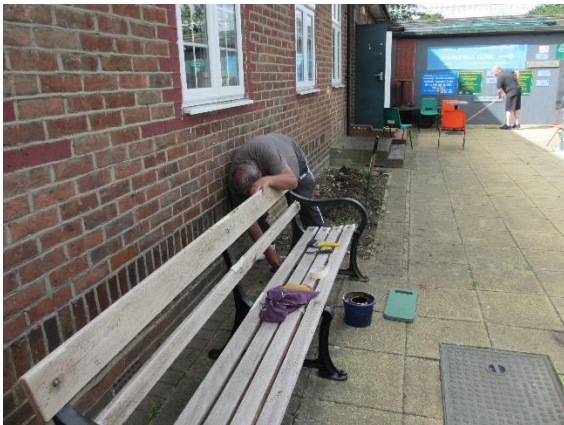


During our sessions we tend to break into smaller groups to undertake tasks

One team tends to undertake gardening roles, although we all join in some weeks. We try and keep to cleaned the path of weeds as it makes the space so much more welcoming. Another group fitted a drain pipe and vent in the inner courtyard.

We will use the autumn, winter and spring time to refit the inner courtyard into a Health and Well Being Area for the wider community to use.

Other team completed the metal paint work on the benches, we are now on to the last phase.



All this work has highlighted that we have 3 beds that really could do with some planting.

The space does not get a lot of sunlight but if you have any perennial plants that you have grown and are looking to home, please let me know and I will hopefully find space at Goldsmiths to plant them.





On the 5 September the Downham Men's Group meeting was held in Beckenham Place Park.

We were led by **Catriona Ross** the **Thames 21** Beckenham Place Park Engagement Officer, who was supported by James Allen, the Beckenham Place Park Ranger and Cliff a Thames21 volunteer.

The day started with us trying to put on waders and a H&S briefing from Catriona. We then went down onto the river bank and started on clearing some branches of a willow tree that had snapped and fallen into the river.

It took us a couple of hours to remove the debris – And then we had cake, but we did miss our tea breaks!



What is going well?

The sessions at Goldsmiths are really going well. Our members have lots of things going on in their lives, but even thinking about them makes me smile. The group are really supporting each other; the regular tea breaks help.

The centre garden grounds are looking so much better; The guys are happy to cut down the grass. The produce has been cropped and handed over to the Community Centre.

The benches are now clean and painted, they make the entrance to the sports area really welcoming.

Our members sign up for the Lewisham Local card.

As a group we will use the autumn/spring time to refit the inner courtyard, hopefully we will build a Health and Well Being Area. We have submitted a funding application to the NHS for extra sessions for the Wellbeing area and indoor Walking Football. I have contacted a colleague who may come up with some ideas for the space. **Action** Spring time: ask for plants!

5 September: was spent with Thames 21 in Beckenham Place Park, we helped with the removal of a branch of a tree that had snapped and was blocking the river. As we cut down the branch we were able to stack the debris on to the bank.

What is going not so well?

The summer is always difficult regarding numbers but this year one of our regular members spent a lot of time in the Ladywell unit recovering. Another regular member mum had an illness which she did not recover from.

The social programme was a bit stalled as we were awaiting confirmation that we could build the Wellbeing area in the courtyard.

Any challenges faced/overcome?

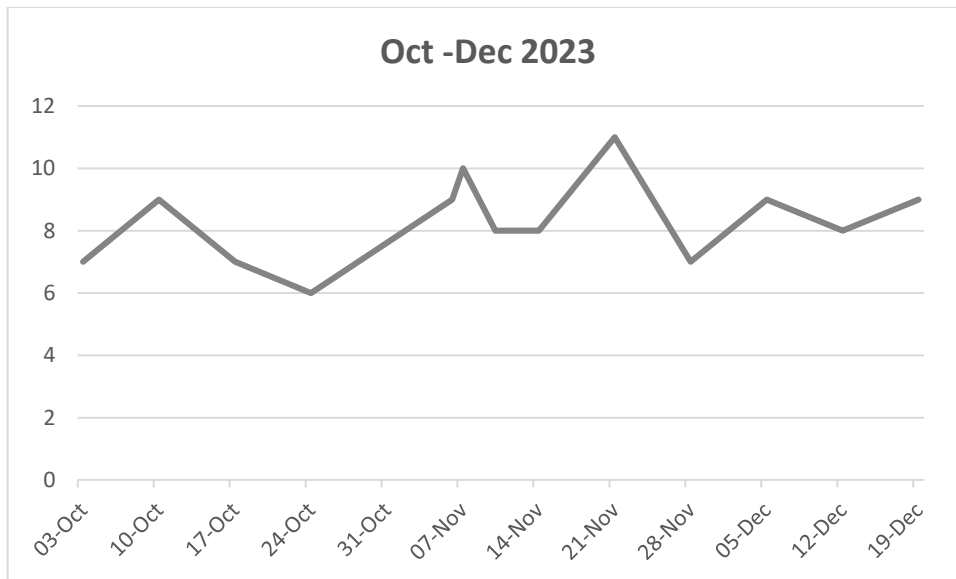
The changes in the management of Goldsmiths Community Centre have had a major impact on our programme.

Whether attendance is in line with expectation?

Although the numbers are not as good as I expected, we have built up an excellent core group. I still look to expect 9 or 10 to be the current norm.

Actively trying to increase numbers?

In the last two months we have received 5 referrals, although we have tried to connect with the Men; they have not attended the sessions.



In Early October, one of our members Beres, left our group to move onto another part of the country.

The session was a celebration for him and the impact he had at the group.

He left with guitar, case and our best wishes going forward.



Downham Remembrance Service 10 November 2023

As part of partnership with other community groups Downham Men's Group were a part of Downham Remembrance Service. This year Armistice day fell on Saturday, so schools would not be in attendance, therefore the Downham Service was delivered on the Friday.



On Monday 7 November DMG assembled to clean the weeds around the Downham Memorial, when we got there the space had already been cleaned.

On Friday 10 November Downham Nutrition Partnership and the Downham Men's Group had a small part in the delivery of Downham Remembrance Service.

Bonus Pastor Catholic College led the collaboration of local primary schools including Downderry, Good Shephard, St Augustine's and St John the Baptist. Canon John Kavanagh Rev Peter Organ and Rev Stuart Leck led service with readers from the schools.

Downham Men's Group supplied the PA system and supplied extra stewards for the service.



The Police and 221 Squadron (Army) along with Janet Daby MP Lewisham East, Downham ward Councillors and a strong turnout of local people also attended the service.

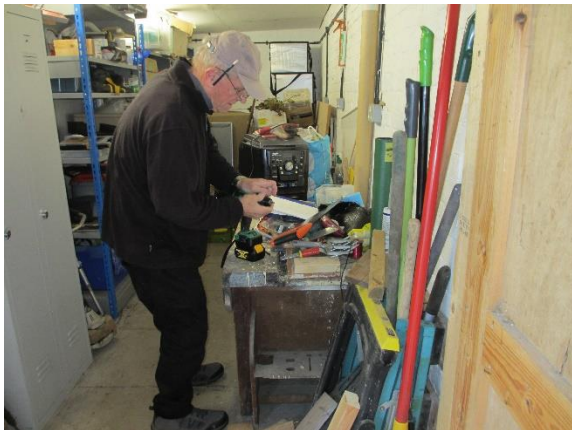


Over the years we have been active at Goldsmiths we have never had to cancel a session, This November was the nearest we came to call the session off, the rain was such a pain.

When I left home the weather was not a concern, the south coast was going to be wet but South East London was to be mainly dry. How wrong could I be, it started to rain and just did not stop!

However, we did get to cut some wood up for the planters for the courtyard. We also filled some of the holes in the door and broke up an old trolley for the castors.

Even in the rain the gardening team still continued to tidy the gardens.



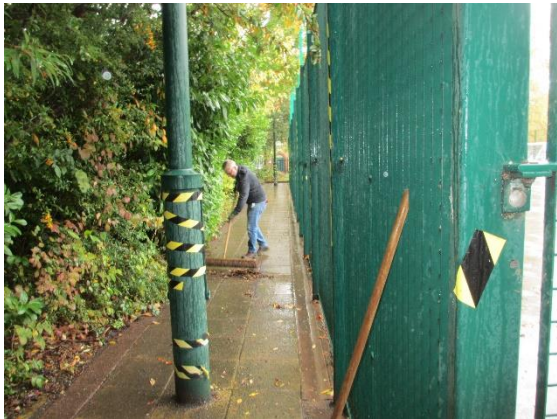
Our new member came up with the plan for the inner courtyard. The plan was sent to the Trustees of Goldsmith Community Centre. The Trustees agreed with our plan but would like the opportunity for wider community involvement, so have invited Downham Men's Group to present at the annual meeting on Saturday 9 December.

During October a team focus has been the inner courtyard, they we have been busy preparing the paintwork on the windows and doors.

Within the centre there was some Scaffold Towers. To use the Towers, we had to purchase some planks. This has given us a secure base to work from.

Some donated a large blue part that will become a feature within the Health & Wellbeing area.





DMG undertake regular weed removal around, and in, the sport cage. The cage is used by local young people.



Tuesday 12 December Beckenham Place Park

There has been a little delay, due to the works that are happening. in delivering our Thames 21 project in Beckenham Place Park!

On the 12 December we gathered in the park to meet up with Catriona Ross Thames 21 Beckenham Place Park Engagement Officer. Catriona gave us a briefing in the old pre-school. As we came out it started to rain, the rain then just poured down.



A very short walk with sheets of rain in Beckenham Place Park sent me back to being a kid getting wet in the River.



As we were in the park we decided to split into two groups. The main group were able to cut down a willow tree that was blocking the path, another group went back to drink tea and chat!

James Allen LBL Lead Ranger cut up the trunk of the tree and the DMG cut back the branches.

Each month Downham Men's Group will be in the park helping Thames 21 with trying to improve the River Ravensbourne through the park, our next session is planned for the 9 January.

What is going well?

The sessions at Goldsmiths are really going well. Our members have lots of things going on in their lives, but even thinking about them makes me smile. The group are really supporting each other; the regular tea breaks help. The relationship is really supportive of each other.

The centre garden just looks so much better; the changes in weather means that we are focusing on next year's planting.

The inner courtyard, is moving but very slowly. This will be our focus in 2024, We have put in an application to increase the hours we deliver at Goldsmiths.

We had 7 members and 2 LBL staff turn out on Monday 7 November, The idea was to weed around the Downham War Memorial, however when we got there the space had already been cleaned. So we have coffee in the café and went home.

The Downham Remembrance service was held on Friday 10 November. 7 DMG members turn up to help with this important event. We supply the PA for the event and also help steward. After the event the members make sure the wreaths are secure.



Our monthly programme with Thames 21 in Beckenham Place Park is moving forward. Although it rained we were able to cut back a tree which was blocking the path.

What is going not so well?

Any challenges faced/overcome?

The weather during November really made changes to our programme, one Tuesday there was no forecast of rain but at 10am the rain came and poured down during the whole session.

Whether attendance is in line with expectation?

Although the numbers are not as good as I expected, we have built up an excellent core group. I still look to expect 9 or 10 to be the current norm.

Actively trying to increase numbers?

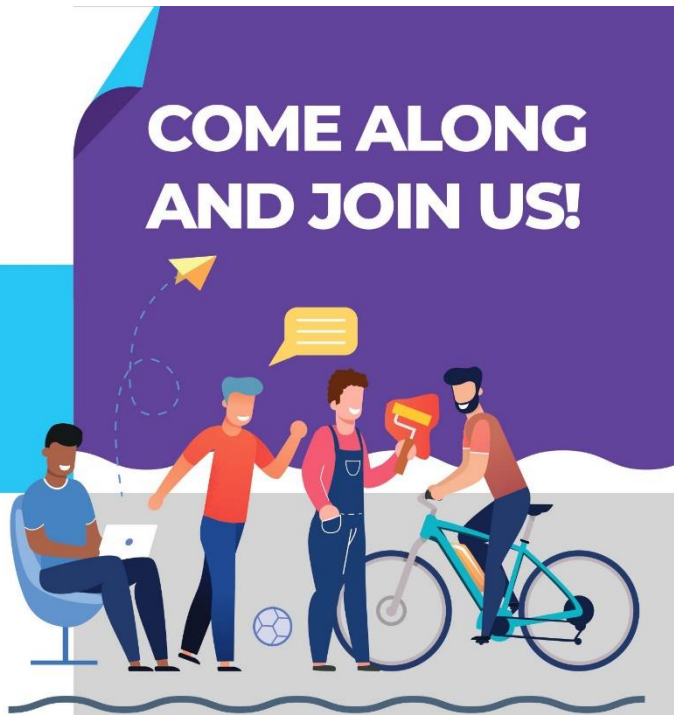
In the last month we have had referrals from a range of partners, including men who have issues engaging.



Creating a supportive environment where men are encouraged to participate and are involved in the activities offered.

Providing a range of practical activities such as:

- ✓ Gardening
- ✓ DIY - to learn new skills
- ✓ ICT training
- ✓ Walking Football



Interactive Session
 Monday 1pm-4pm
 Goldsmiths Community Centre
 SE6 1QD



Walking Football (£3)
 Wednesday 3pm-4pm
 Thursday 7pm-8pm
 Ten Em Bee Sports Development Centre BR1 4JY



Interactive Session
 Thursday 10am-1pm
 Goldsmiths Community Centre
 SE6 1QD



COME ALONG AND JOIN US!

Our group runs from Goldsmiths Community Centre and Ten Em Bee Sports Development Centre

Supported by:



Get in touch

To join us or find out more information, please contact:

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☎ 07821 292 317

👉 www.blueribbonfoundation.org.uk

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