

# HIN Dementia Programme: Peer Support

## Why is this important?

Engagement with organisations, community groups and people with dementia and their carers highlighted a need for more opportunities to meet others in similar situations:

- There is variation in access to structured peer support across South London and long waiting lists for groups
- Structured peer support does not appeal to everyone; there is an identified need for informal social support for people with dementia and their carers
- There is limited evaluation of the benefits of peer support for people with dementia\*

### Aim:

**To support the development of sophisticated peer support 'system' which is sustainable, affordable and meets the needs of the whole population of people with dementia and their carers.**

*"Our project allows people with dementia to socialise and integrate within the community like everyone else. It increases confidence and enables people to continue to be as independent as possible"*

Facilitator of Peer Support Group

*"The [social support] club helps me remember certain things. I feel good coming here; I don't think about the dementia, I don't feel confused here. It helps keep my mind strong, I think about the goodness – the club brings goodness to my life"*

Person with dementia.

### Finding out the facts. We...

- Mapped peer and social support opportunities by Borough.
- Met with group organisers and facilitators to understand (1) key considerations and challenges associated with setting up and running support groups for people with dementia and (2) what information and help older people community groups need to support people with dementia.
- Visited groups across South London to find good practice
- Wrote up case studies of innovative and effective practice

### Next steps...

- Undertake a social return on investment (SROI) study of local peer support groups to demonstrate the value to society
- Compile this learning in a resource pack to support providers and commissioners of peer support provision
- Cascade this information through the Dementia Action Alliances

\*Joseph Rowntree Foundation: A stronger collective voice for people with dementia.

<http://www.jrf.org.uk/publications/stronger-collective-voice>

Heathbridge National Evaluation of Peer Support Networks <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/peer-support-networks-and-dementia-advisers-evaluation>

Mental Health Foundation Evaluation of Self Help Groups for Dementia

<http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/publications/dementia-self-help-report>