

Appendix 3: Embedding Public Health – Reducing Loneliness and Supporting Mental Health Through Creative People & Places (CPP)

The Creative People and Places (CPP) programme—Creative Communities Brent—forms a central pillar of how the Culture Strategy (2026–31) delivers against Brent Council’s health and wellbeing priorities. The programme is explicitly designed to address isolation, poor mental health, health inequalities, and low arts engagement, particularly among Black and Asian communities, people with SEND, older adults, carers, and residents with long-term health conditions.

This aligns directly with Public Health Brent’s objectives to reduce loneliness, strengthen social connection, improve mental wellbeing, and widen participation in protective, community-based activities.

CPP is co-funded by Brent Culture and Brent Public Health, and the evaluation is supported by Public Health’s research team, ensuring continuous learning and a strong evidence base for future strategy delivery.

1. CPP’s Public Health Focus

The CPP application explicitly identifies improvements to mental health, respiratory health, obesity, hypertension, and social isolation as core intended outcomes. It highlights that the programme is created “to improve health outcomes tackling some of the health inequality highlighted in the borough particularly mental health...” and is shaped around populations at risk of isolation and poor wellbeing.

The programme uses participatory arts, social connection, shared cultural experiences and community decision-making as evidence-based mechanisms for improving wellbeing.

Brent Public Health provides:

- Match funding (50% of total match)
- Research oversight, including mixed-methods evaluation and segmentation research to understand health inequalities and the drivers of isolation
- Expertise in embedding inclusive and intersectional health approaches throughout delivery

2. Programme Elements Addressing Loneliness & Mental Health

Through extensive review of the activity plan, the CPP delivery model uses four major strands that directly support Brent’s health and wellbeing goals:

A. Participatory Arts for Wellbeing

CPP delivers a large, recurring portfolio of participatory activities designed to reduce isolation, improve mood, and support residents with mental health conditions.

Key components include:

1. Weekly and Monthly Creative Workshops

Beginning April 2027, the programme delivers:

- 4 x weekly community dance sessions across the borough (with a focus on physical activity, stress reduction and connection)
- Monthly making workshops (craft, textiles, lantern-making, visual arts)
- 2 x weekly singing-for-wellbeing sessions (targeting respiratory issues, anxiety, low mood)
- 3 x monthly music workshops (including reggae, percussion, DJing)
- Weekly comedy workshops exploring humour as a tool for mental health and confidence-building
- SEND adult creative clubs (monthly) to reduce isolation for disabled adults and carers

These form a sustained, borough-wide schedule of activity shown in the CPP plan.

2. Targeted Mental Health-Focused Groups

Activities include:

- Singing sessions for people with mental health-related difficulties and respiratory conditions
- Dance activity for people experiencing stress, anxiety, obesity or hypertension
- Comedy groups for young carers and adults with mental health concerns, culminating in public sharings that build confidence and social inclusion
- Music sessions for people with SEND and mental health challenges

These offer regular social contact, physical activation, positive affect, and self-expression—all recognised protective factors for mental wellbeing.

B. Regular Lunch Clubs, Participatory Meals & Community Dine-and-Talk Events

One of the most significant CPP mechanisms for combating loneliness is its structured programme of community meals, present throughout the three-year timetable.

Community Panel “Dine & Talk Events” (Lunch Clubs)

From January 2027 and repeated every quarter (July, December, April etc.), CPP hosts lunch clubs where:

- Local residents dine together
- Share views about culture and wellbeing
- Take part in light creative activities (crafts, music)
- Contribute to decision-making around commissioned projects

These events specifically target:

- Older adults
- Isolated residents
- People with mental health challenges
- People experiencing socio-economic disadvantage
- Disabled adults and carers

They create a culturally inclusive, safe environment where social connection is prioritised.

Community Meals & Listening Events

The application also highlights open listening events with food, designed to reduce anxiety, increase comfort levels, and encourage participation—particularly for residents who would not normally attend civic or cultural forums. These begin as early as 2025 and continue through the programme.

C. Targeted Events for Marginalised & At-Risk Groups

CPP includes specific cultural events and participatory programmes designed for communities at heightened risk of isolation or mental health inequalities.

1. Afro-Caribbean Elders Dance Events (Simmer Down)

Quarterly participatory and professional music/dance gatherings designed to bring older Afro-Caribbean residents together, celebrate heritage, and reduce loneliness.

2. SEND Saturday Clubs & Creative Workshops

Monthly SEND creative clubs for disabled adults and children, reducing isolation and providing respite for parents/carers.

3. Intergenerational Festivals & Celebrations

Including:

- Windrush Day events
- Celebrating Lights / Diwali Festival

- Black History Month programme
- Eid Crafts events

These festivals are co-designed and include participatory elements that actively bring together diverse communities who might otherwise remain disconnected.

4. Pantomime & Schools Engagement (Act Together)

The pantomime/play includes:

- A community cast
- A community choir
- SEND participation
- A schools' touring version reaching 7,500 children

This supports young people facing isolation, improves confidence, and creates shared social experiences for families.

D. Social Prescribing Alignment

CPP plans to directly engage at least 360 residents via social prescribing, connecting GP-referred or socially isolated individuals with regular creative activity. This aligns with national practice in arts-based health interventions.

The participatory programme structure (sustained, welcoming, local, and relational) is intentionally designed to be compatible with Brent's social prescribing pathways.

3. Mechanisms for Reducing Loneliness and Improving Mental Health

Based on the activity plan, CPP's approach includes the following embedded mechanisms:

- Regular, repeated, localised sessions → builds routine, confidence and relational continuity
- Community-led decision-making → increases agency, trust and belonging
- Food-based gatherings → lowers psychological barriers and fosters informal social bonding
- Arts as a low-pressure connector → provides a non-clinical entry point for wellbeing support
- Targeted outreach through partners (e.g., SEND centres, care homes, faith groups) → reaches people most at risk of isolation
- Activities in parks and public realm → supports physical activity, nature connection and mental health
- Digital offer → supports housebound or isolated residents to engage at home (four community-chosen online creative courses)

4. Strategic Value for Brent Council

CPP delivers directly against:

- Borough Plan: A Healthier Brent (reducing health inequalities, improving mental wellbeing)
- Thriving Communities (reducing loneliness, improving social cohesion)
- Cultural Strategy Goals (inclusion, accessibility, community voice)
- Public Health Strategy (intersectional health improvement, targeted actions for vulnerable groups)

The programme embeds cross-sector infrastructure that will last beyond the CPP funding period, with:

- A community steering group
- A network of activity leaders
- Evidence-based evaluation
- New models for public health × culture integration