



# Cabinet

**Title:** Update on the Progress of the Council's Access for All Paper No. 25-322 Programme

**Date:** 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2025

**Cabinet Member for:** Leader

**Details of Executive Director:** Assistant Chief Executive

## 1. **Executive Summary**

1.1. Wandsworth Council expanded its innovative Access for All scheme in April 2025, to provide concessions on council services and targeted support programmes for low-income and other eligible residents across the borough. This report provides an update on the progress of the scheme since launch, including the successful sign up campaign and data on take-up of offers.

## 2. **Recommendation/s:**

2.1. Cabinet is recommended to:

- Note the progress of the Access for All programme since April 2025.

## 3. **Details**

### **Background**

3.1. Wandsworth Council's innovative Access for All Scheme was expanded in April 2025, to become Britain's Best Concession's Scheme. It aims to make key Council services and local activities more affordable for all and ensure that everyone who lives in Wandsworth can access the opportunities which make Wandsworth special.

3.2. The scheme provides eligible residents with 50-100% discounts on a range of Council services and partner offers, centred around leisure, wellbeing and culture. This includes free off-peak gym memberships, half-price access to leisure activities like swimming and tennis, and discounted venue hire, fishing permits, and allotments. Residents can also access reduced-cost digital skills courses, free English and Maths classes and waived library fees. Life events



are supported through free birth certificates, discounted weddings, and bereavement services. Since launch, over 6,500 residents, primarily from areas of higher deprivation and those on Universal Credit, have signed up.

- 3.3. The scheme is constantly evolving, using a data-driven and feedback-led approach to identify new prospective offers that will support residents with all aspects of their lives. This includes the recent expansion to private sector partners, including Lime and Forest e-bikes and Voi e-scooters, aiming to bring business to the borough and provide residents with a range of new and exciting offers.



- 3.4. Access for All has also been recognised by the LGA as an example of innovative and best practice within local government, with the Council invited to give a presentation on the programme at the 2025 LGA conference in Liverpool. The talk attracted a high level of engagement from other local authorities interested in hearing how they may be able to adopt elements within their own areas.
- 3.5. The Access for All scheme is a key part of Wandsworth Council's commitment to building a fairer borough. It is designed to ensure that residents who are most at risk of disadvantage can access the same opportunities that make Wandsworth an amazing place to live, work, and visit. At the same time, we are proud to have introduced a range of universal support measures that benefit all residents. These include delivering the largest Cost of Living Fund in London, expanding and renovating our brilliant Family Hubs, and partnering with Dolly Parton's initiative to gift a free book each month to all Wandsworth children from birth until they turn five.



### Delivering Britain’s Best Concessions Scheme

- 3.6. The first phase of the scheme, launched in July 2023, focused on leisure access, aiming to promote physical and mental wellbeing through free and discounted sporting and leisure activities. Offers include free off-peak gym and swim sessions at Council-run leisure centres and 260 free daily tickets to Tooting Bec Lido.
- 3.7. Phase 2, launched at the end of April this year, expanded the scheme to include a broader range of concessions across virtually all council services and selected partner organisations, in line with the Access for All framework set out in Paper No. 24-181. Services which a resident must access are offered at 100% off, and for services residents want to access are offered at 50% off.





- 3.8. The Phase 2 launch event took place at York Gardens Library, a vibrant and welcoming community hub in the heart of Falconbrook. Over 80 local community groups and service providers attended, coming together to champion the Access for All initiative. They were encouraged to raise awareness, introduce residents to the new offerings, and support sign-ups to the scheme. To help spread the word, attendees received marketing packs containing posters, flyers, and A5 guides, ready to be displayed in their spaces to inform and encourage local residents to get involved.



- 3.9. Following the launch, the Council ran a data-driven, targeted sign-up campaign. Central to this approach is the use of the Low-Income Family Tracker (LIFT), developed by Policy in Practice, which has already helped deliver £4.3m yearly in financial benefits to Wandsworth residents through driving greater take-up of benefits such as Pension Credit, Free School Meals, and water social tariffs. Through LIFT, the Council has identified approximately 17,000 households likely to be eligible for Access for All, each of whom have been sent a personalised letter inviting them to apply for membership. In addition we have sent tailored text messages and emails to families where we had suitable service data including people receiving Free School Meals, refugees, asylum seekers, carers, and leisure centre users.
- 3.10. To complement this targeted outreach, the Access for All team has attended a range of community events across the borough. These include the Leader's Community Drop-Ins, Big Play Out, and the Refugee Week Celebration, providing face-to-face support and raising awareness of the scheme. In addition, officers have delivered training to frontline staff including librarians, social prescribers, and Family Hub teams, equipping them to assist residents with in-person sign-ups. Officers have also provided training to key partners,



including local Job Centre Work Coaches to enable them to promote the scheme directly to people they work with.

3.11. The Communications Team also launched a comprehensive campaign to raise awareness of the expansion of the scheme and the new membership card, encouraging people to sign up and access the offers via the new system. This included some borough-wide tactics, for example a news story on the Council’s website, a press release shared with key media contacts, posters on the borough’s Double Crown poster sites (pictured below) and general social media posts. It was also supported with targeted tactics, such as information shared in the Voluntary and Community Sector newsletter, targeted adverts on Facebook and Instagram delivered to a tailored audience and internal communications. The Communications Team have also collected individual case studies from residents that have benefitted from the discounted wedding service, room hire and swimming to tell the stories of those who have directly benefitted from the scheme. This content has been a key focus of communications activity.



3.12. The Council continues to promote the Access for All Scheme through its established communications channels, including social media platforms,



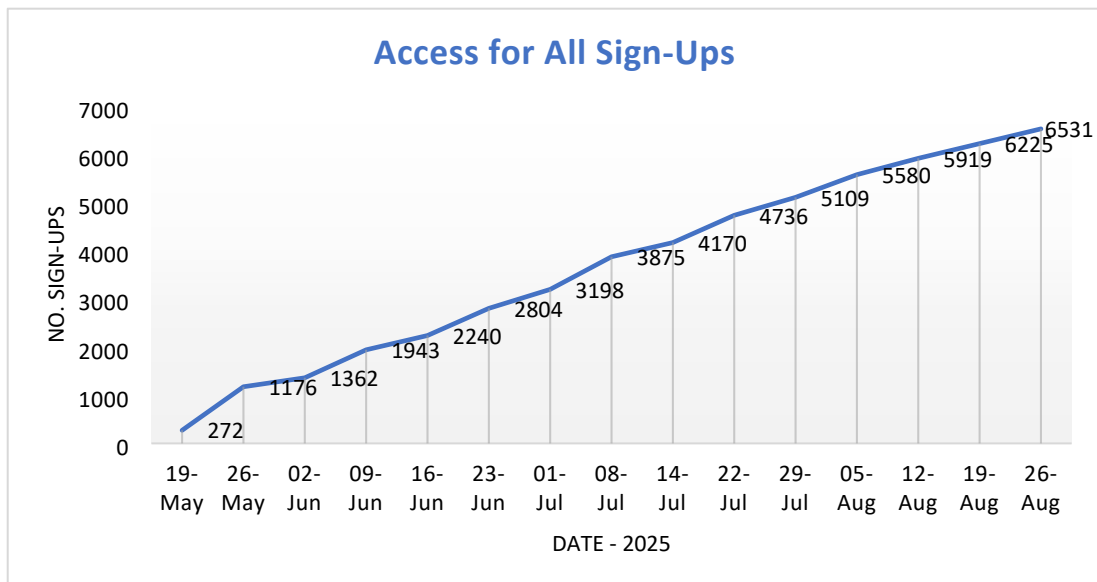
the Brightside magazine, and the Council's website. Access for All members, if they have opted in, also now receive a monthly newsletter and occasionally a specific 'newsflash' email to keep them informed. These channels are used to raise awareness of the scheme, highlight new offers, and encourage eligible residents to apply. Information on how Access for All members heard about the scheme is included in Appendix A.

### **Membership**

- 3.13. Residents can apply for the Access for All Scheme via the Wandsworth Council website, through a process which has been designed to be straightforward for residents whilst still maintaining suitable checks on eligibility. The application form requires basic personal details, proof of residency in the borough (such as a recent utility bill or bank statement), and evidence of eligibility, generally in the form of government issued document showing receipt of the qualifying benefits or confirmation of status as a care leaver, asylum seeker, or other eligible category.
- 3.14. Applicants must also upload a passport-style photograph, which is added to their membership card. Council officers review applications to ensure the documents uploaded are suitable evidence of eligibility, and if necessary seek further information from applicants. The process has been designed to be simple and inclusive, with telephone or in-person support available for residents who may need extra help completing the application.
- 3.15. After sign-up, members receive a digital or physical membership card which allows them to access offers in a non-stigmatising way and makes it easy for partners to accept as proof of eligibility for concessions. Membership cards include a QR code which allows services to bring up a live profile of the member to confirm they still have an active membership, and also displays a photo of the member to ensure cards are not being misused.

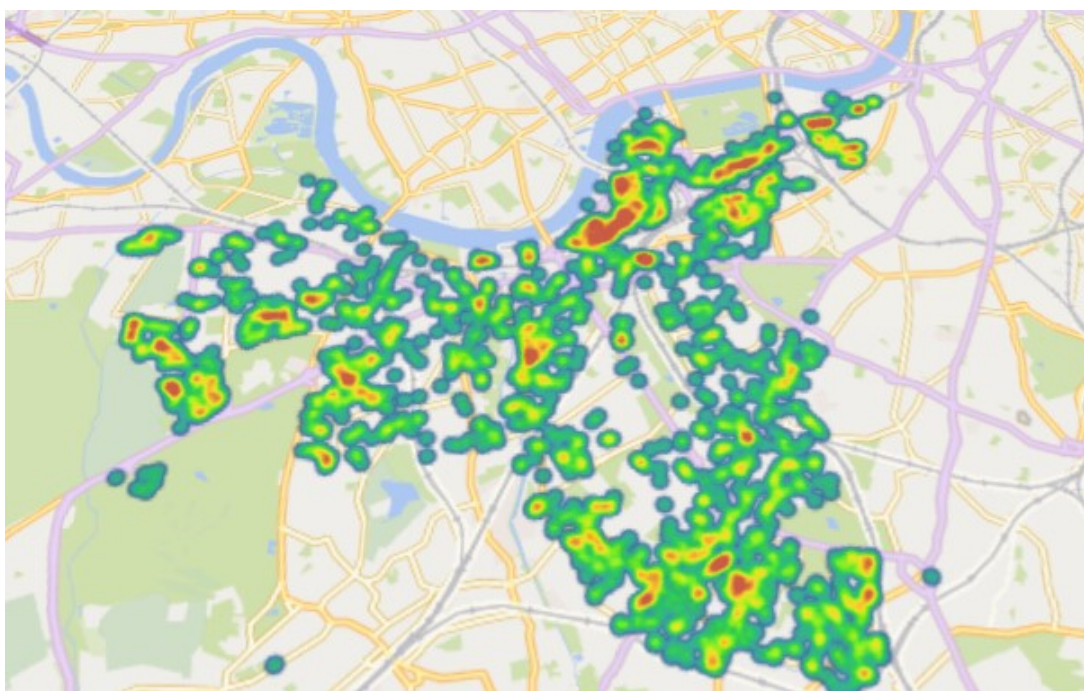


3.16. The membership scheme has been very well received, with the promotion campaign delivering a high engagement with the scheme. Since April, there have been over 6,500 residents sign-up including 3,302 adult memberships and 3,229 children/dependents. Growth in membership has been steady since launch, reflecting the success of the sign-up campaign.





- 3.17. The proportion of sign-ups varies across eligibility criteria, seeing the highest proportion of sign-ups from people in receipt of Universal Credit, Free School Meals and Carers Allowance. This in part reflects the groups we were best able to directly contact as part of the targeted sign-up campaign. Sign-ups from other groups has been lower, including those in receipt of Pension Credit, Attendance Allowance, and Employment Support Allowance, and as part of the next stage of the programme officers will explore how to increase take-up among these lower represented groups.
- 3.18. Overall, the highest number of sign-ups has been from those in receipt of Universal Credit, accounting for 2,255 adult members (approximately 68% of members). Sign-ups have been lower from other groups including asylum seekers and refugees (44 sign-ups, 1.3% of members), Incapacity Benefit (29 members, 0.8%) and Income Support (24 members, 0.7%). Full details on the number of sign-ups by eligibility criteria are included in Appendix A.



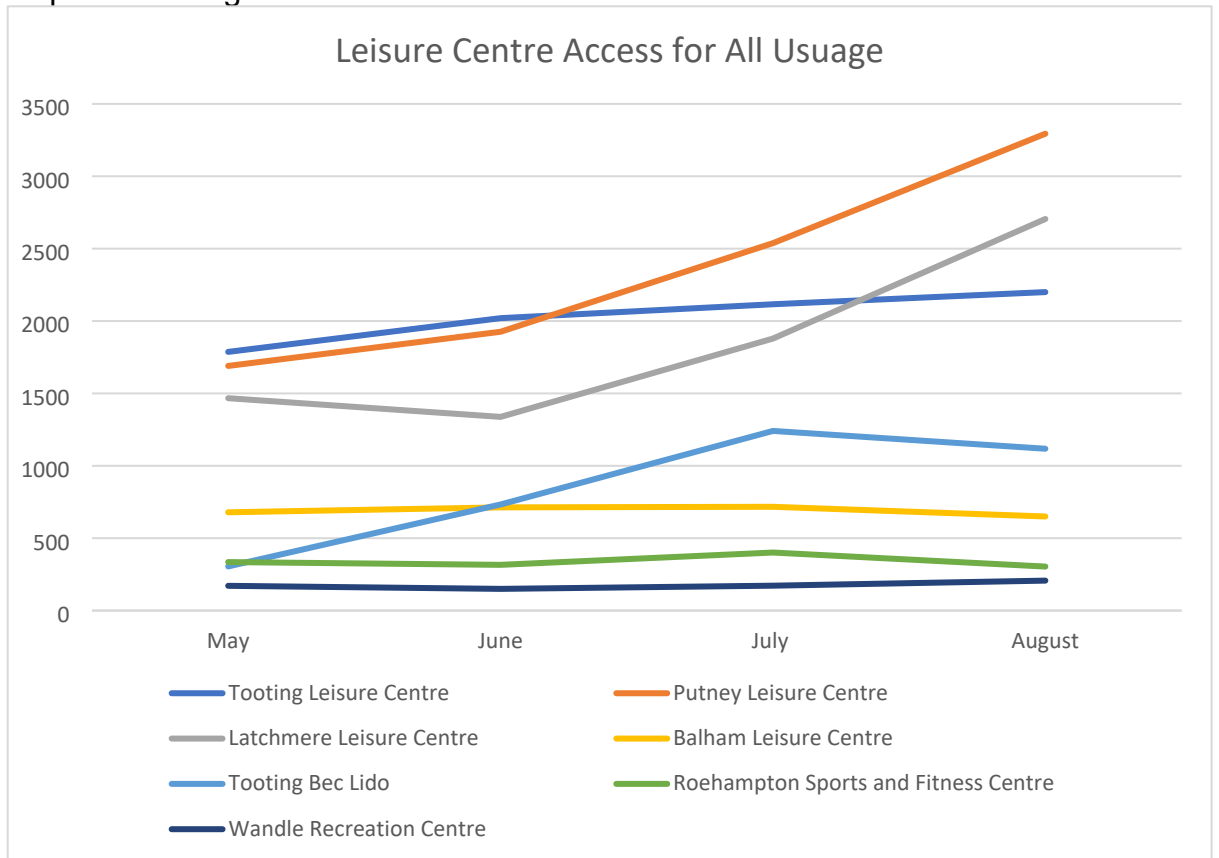
- 3.19. We have also seen a good geographical distribution of sign-ups, with residents joining from across the borough. There has a higher concentration of applications from residents in Roehampton, Falconbrook and Furzedown wards and lower in Northcote, Southfields and Lavender wards. This distribution is in line with expectations based on understanding of need across



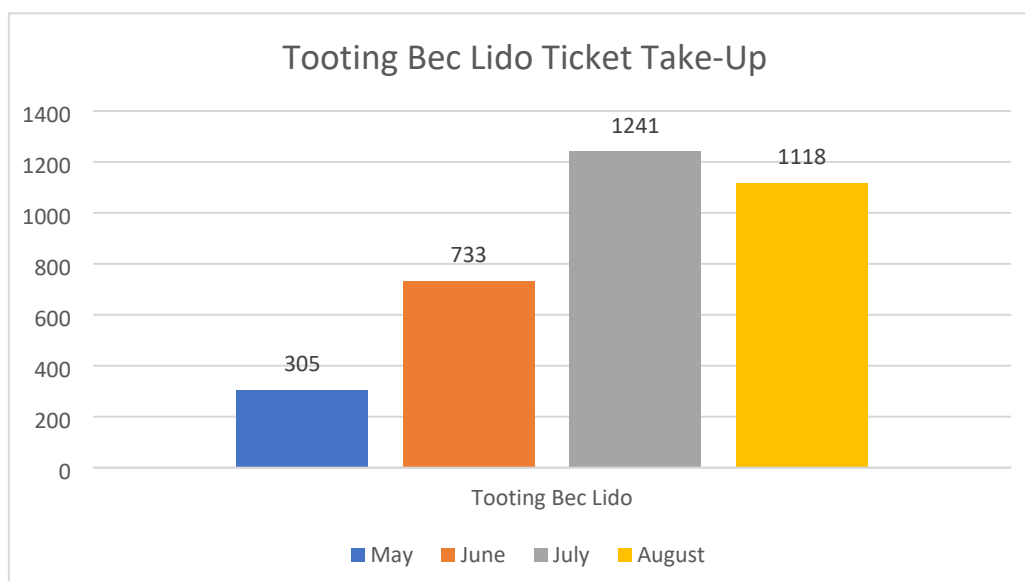
the borough, suggesting Access for All is successfully reaching its intended audience. The spots outside of the borough refer to those placed in temporary accommodation outside the borough by Wandsworth Council. A full breakdown of memberships by ward is included in Appendix A.

**Offer Uptake**

3.20. Take-up of Access for All offers continues to grow as awareness about the range of promotions increases. Leisure services remain the most popular element of the scheme, reflecting in part the fact that these offers have been in place for longer and therefore have wider awareness:



3.21. The free daily tickets for Tooting Bec Lido also remain popular, with take-up increasing with the hotter weather:



- 3.22. For the expanded range of offers introduced since April, take-up has varied according to a range of factors. A breakdown of the take-up of the full range of offers is included at Appendix B.
- 3.23. Some of these offers are seasonal, for example take-up of the allotment concession is expected to increase from October when annual rents are collected, and take up of offers at Putney School of Art and Design should increase once the new programme of courses begins in the Autumn. Other offers, such as the 50% sports pitch concession and bereavement services offers were delayed in their go live whilst the Council worked with its partners to finalise how they would operate. The offers launched in July and August respectively and will be promoted accordingly.
- 3.24. There has been a strong demand for Access for All's cultural offers. Since April, there have been 440 Access for All members link their membership to their library account, which grants them free book reservations and waives late return fees. It also allows users to receive a 50% discount on room bookings, with 29 discounted bookings made since April.
- 3.25. Promoting and enabling participation in Wandsworth's flagship year as London Borough of Culture has been a key aim of the programme. We have made hundreds of Access for All tickets available across our London Borough of Culture events, at a nominal cost of £3 per person. These events and reduced price tickets have been hugely popular, with 1,010 £3 tickets sold for

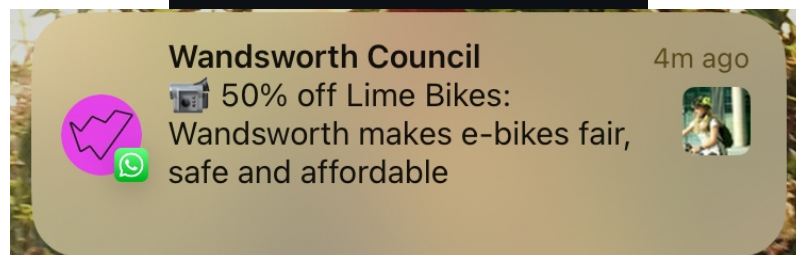


Country on the Common, 1019 for Battersea Park in Concert and 800 for Secret Cinema's immersive Grease experience in Battersea Park.





- 3.26. In addition to the concessions for Council services, the Council has funded targeted support schemes for Access for All residents. The flagship example of which is the expansion of the Baby Box scheme to any first time parent eligible for Access for All. Since the expansion of the eligibility in April, there have been 136 boxes allocated to new parents, providing them with essentials goods to support their baby's early years and linking them into the Council's family hub provision. The programme has also funded a pilot scheme, allowing lifelong learning to provide functional English and Maths skills tutoring through the Council's libraries. 12 learners have enrolled on the first course.
- 3.27. The scheme has also worked with Power2Connect to procure 320 laptops and smartphones to distribute to residents eligible for Access for All who would otherwise be digitally excluded. Power2Connect will begin to distribute these devices from late September.
- 3.28. The next phase of Access for All aims to see the range of offers expand further, to include more provided by businesses and community groups in the borough. An early example of this has been the Council's collaboration with the Furzedown Literary Festival which made reduced-priced tickets available for its first season of events including LitFest in May, Queer Furzedown LitFest in June, and author talk with Sandra Newman in September.
- 3.29. The Council's agreements with the borough's e-bike and e-scooter providers provides a model for how private sector offers can operate. Lime, Forest, and Voi have each agreed to extend their concessions schemes to accept Access for All membership as proof of eligibility, providing half-price hire for members. These offers have been made available as part of the firm's commitment to being responsible and community-minded operators, and come at no cost to the Council. Since the launch of these offers, over 100 Access for All members have signed for a concession membership with these providers. The Council has promoted the availability of these offers through a dedicated news story, a bespoke video, its own WhatsApp channel and other trusted local comms channels:



3.30. The Council is able to promote the availability of these offers through regular communications with Access for All members, including a monthly e-newsletter. These communications are used to showcase opportunities and new offers, such as events delivered through the London Borough of Culture programme, including Country on the Common and Secret Cinema. Engagement with the newsletter is high, with over 2,500 members receiving it each month, 58% of whom click through/open the email. The Access for All team will ensure that forthcoming editions of the newsletter highlight how to access offers which have so far seen a lower level of take-up.

### Budget Allocations



- 3.31. Access for All is enabled by a £4.85m fund established in Paper No. 24-181 which was transferred into the Access for All Reserve. Authority to draw down from this reserve is delegated to the Assistant Chief Executive and Executive Director of Finance, in consultation with the relevant cabinet members.
- 3.32. In the last financial year (2024-25), £383,000 was spent to support the programme. This primarily related to the costs associated with providing the leisure offers under the first phase of the scheme, plus the set-up costs for the creation of the expanded scheme, including membership platform.
- 3.33. The Access for All programme board has approved further allocations from the Access for All reserve to cover the costs of the expanded concessions package, targeted support schemes, and ongoing operational costs for the programme. To date, £2.98m has been allocated, leaving £1.87m remaining. These allocations have been based on forecast demand for offers, assuming a high level of uptake to avoid the risk that costs exceed budget. It is therefore possible that some funds allocated will be returned to the Access for All reserve once actual demand is known.
- 3.34. These allocations are summarised in the table below

<b>Category</b>	<b>Allocated Funding</b>
Phase 1 Leisure Offers	£403,000
Phase 2 Concessions	£892,500
London Borough of Culture Offer	£356,000
Targeted Support Programmes	£997,250
Programme Set-Up Costs	£170,012
Programme Administration	£162,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>£2,980,762</b>

### **Next Steps**

- 3.35. The Access for All programme has been hugely successful since the launch of the expanded scheme in April, reaching over 13% of the eligible population in just a few months. We will continue to build on this over the coming months, to continue to drive sign-ups, promote up-take of offers, and secure additional offers, maintaining Access for All's status as Britain's best concessions scheme.
- 3.36. As the data in the sign-up section shows, in the initial months of the expanded scheme we have seen a broad range of sign-ups, with many driven by the



targeted comms campaigns we have run such as the LIFT platform letters. In the next stage we will focus on eligibility groups where we have seen a lower proportion of sign-ups including Pension Credit, Attendance Allowance, and Personal Independence Payments. Alongside this we will continue to attend events and locations throughout the borough to promote the scheme, including the ongoing Community Drop-ins.

- 3.37. Alongside the promotion of general membership, we will also continue to promote individual offers to help translate sign-ups into active take-up of offers. We will work with services to explore how to most effectively promote their offers, be it through simplifying booking processes, increasing signage at the point of access, or using channels such as the Access for All e-newsletter or targeted ads to increase awareness.
- 3.38. We will continue to expand the range of offers and targeted support programmes. This includes both agreeing further offers with local businesses and community partners, as well as working with council services to identify suitable uses for the remaining Access for All fund. We will also conduct a survey of Access for All members to hear their views about the scheme and their priorities for how it should grow.

#### **4. Financial Implications**

- 4.1. The Access for All Reserve was established during 2024/25 using the revenue underspend identified at outturn 2023/24 (as a result of higher than budgeted treasury investment income) of £4.85m. The Access for All programme initiatives outlined in this report have been and will continue to be funded from this reserve.

#### **5. Conclusion**

- 5.1. Since the launch of the expanded scheme in April 2025, Access for All has seen significant success. The data-driven, targeted sign-up campaign has ensured the scheme has been able to reach those it is designed to support, with over 6,500 registered for Access for all membership since April. Take-up of offers continues to grow, with well-established offers in the leisure sector seeing a high-level of usage. Awareness of some of the more recently added offers remains lower, and so this will be an area of focus for officers over the coming months. The scheme has been well received by residents, with positive feedback from members on the difference it has made to their lives. A more formal survey of members will be completed in the second half of the year to get a better understanding of what is working well and what other areas



residents would wish to see an Access for All offer in. The other area of focus will be to continue to work with local businesses and community groups to further expand the range of offers beyond Council services.



### Access for All Membership by Eligibility

The following table presents data on the qualifying benefits that residents are currently eligible for. Residents may be eligible for more than one category. These figures are for adult members, who use their proof of eligibility to apply on behalf of their children/dependents.

Category that you are currently eligible for	Members in receipt	Total population eligible	Percentage targeted
Universal Credit	2,255	24,349	9.26%
Free School Meals	867	8,024	10.81%
Housing Benefit	843	11,430	7.38%
Council Tax Support	716	15,260	4.69%
Personal Independence Payment (PIP)	587	12,553	4.68%
Disability Living Allowance	345	4,404	7.83%
Carer's Allowance	330	3,193	10.34%
Employment Support Allowance	139	5,022	2.77%
Pension Credit	132	5,797	2.28%
Child and Working Tax Credit	86	No data	No data
Jobseekers Allowance	55	727	7.57%
Asylum Seekers and Refugees	44	699	6.29%
Attendance Allowance	43	3,398	1.27%
Looked after children / care leavers	34	582	5.84%
Incapacity Benefit / Severe Disablement Allowance	29	102	28.43%
Income Support	24	243	9.88%

### Access for All Membership by Ward

The following table presents data on the total number of registered members by ward. This figure excludes children and dependents who are registered on their parent's membership.

Ward	Count of Member ID
Roehampton	315



<b>Furzedown</b>	264
<b>Falconbrook</b>	261
<b>Battersea Park</b>	220
<b>Shaftesbury &amp; Queenstown</b>	214
<b>Tooting Broadway</b>	211
<b>West Hill</b>	201
<b>Tooting Bec</b>	201
<b>Wandsworth Town</b>	180
<b>West Putney</b>	174
<b>St Mary's</b>	147
<b>Wandsworth Common</b>	137
<b>Balham</b>	120
<b>East Putney</b>	119
<b>Wandle</b>	113
<b>Nine Elms</b>	94
<b>South Balham</b>	87
<b>Thamesfield</b>	68
<b>Trinity</b>	63
<b>Lavender</b>	55
<b>Southfields</b>	38
<b>Northcote</b>	37
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>3319</b>

### Membership Referrals

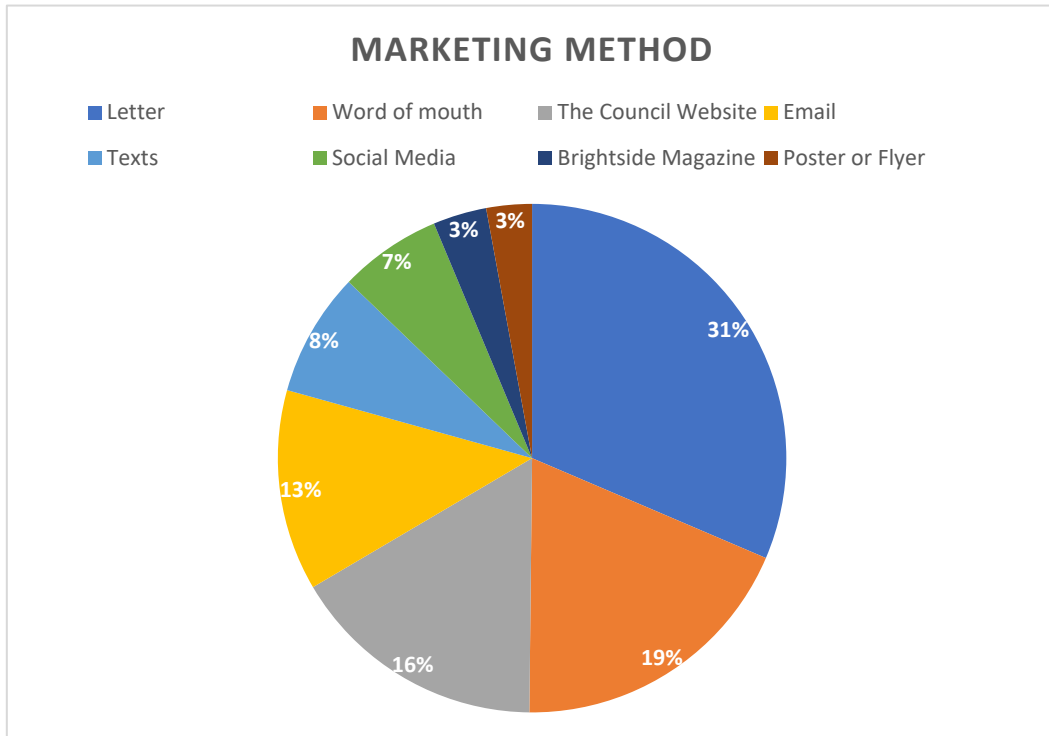
This table demonstrates how members have heard about the Access for All scheme. Members can select several options in their application. Most residents (922) heard about the scheme through the targeted letter campaigns using the LIFT platform's data, illustrating the effectiveness of data-driven approaches. It is positive to see that the second highest method of hearing about the scheme is through word of mouth. This learning will be used to develop future communication and engagement strategies.

<b>Marketing Method</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Letter</b>	922
<b>Word of mouth</b>	550
<b>The Council Website</b>	480
<b>Email</b>	375
<b>Texts</b>	231
<b>Social Media</b>	191

Appendix A – Membership Details



<b>Brightside Magazine</b>	100
<b>Poster or Flyer</b>	85
<b>Total</b>	<b>2934</b>





### Leisure Centre Usage:

Leisure Centre	May	June	July	August	Total
<b>Tooting Leisure Centre</b>	1787	2020	2116	2200	8123
<b>Putney Leisure Centre</b>	1690	1926	2538	3294	9448
<b>Latchmere Leisure Centre</b>	1467	1338	1879	2705	7389
<b>Balham Leisure Centre</b>	679	713	717	650	2759
<b>Roehampton Sports and Fitness Centre</b>	335	316	401	304	1356
<b>Wandle Recreation Centre</b>	171	150	172	207	700

### Other Leisure Offers:

Offer	May	June	July	August	Total
Enable operated Sport and Leisure Site uses	22	68	102	120	312
Fishing Permits	0	1	1	0	2
Allotments	1	0	0	1	2
Hall Hire	0	0	0	0	0
Putney School of Art & Design	0	3	0	0	3
Sports Pitch Hire	N/A	N/A	0	TBC	0
<b>Tennis &amp; Padel Hire:</b>					
All Star Tennis Free Play (Adults)	10	7	12	TBC	29
All Star Tennis Free Play (Juniors)	31	22	50	TBC	103
Tennis Holiday Camp	0	2	3	TBC	5
Putt in the Park	0	0	29	16	45

**Library Offers:**

Offer	May	June	July	August	Total
Libraries - Room Booking	8	11	5	5	29
Libraries - Online Courses	0	0	0	0	0
Library Tutoring and Outreach Bids	12	Course ongoing			12

**Registrars Offers:**

Offer	May	June	July	August	Total
Birth and Death Certificates issued	18	14	9	17	58
Marriage/ Civil Partnership Ceremonies	0	1	2	0	3
Notices of Marriage/Civil Partnership	1	3	1	4	9

**Other Council Offers:**

Offer	May	June	July	August	Total
Pest Control	4	12	11	6	33
Bike Hangar Membership	1	1	3	0	5
Baby Boxes	3	1	93	39	136
School Uniform Vouchers (Reception)	N/A	N/A	N/A	519	519
School Uniform Vouchers (Year 7)	N/A	N/A	N/A	770	770

Offers on bereavement services will be in place from August.

**London Borough of Culture:**

Offer	May	June	July	August	Total
Country on the Common	N/A	N/A	1010	N/A	1010
Battersea Park in Concert	N/A	N/A	193	826	1019
Secret Cinema	N/A	N/A	N/A	800	800
Wandsworth Arts Fringe	2	N/A	N/A	N/A	2
Transport Offer	N/A	N/A	53		53