

Model of Best Practice

Background

In January 2007 the Hangleton & Knoll Project (HKP) received Local Area Agreement (LAA) funding from Brighton & Hove City Council. The purpose of the funding was to work with local older people aged 50 and over to establish a resident lead 50+ Steering Group with the initial aims of:

- Assessing current service and activities provision for older people in the area
- Overseeing the development and promotion of such services and activities
- Identifying and addressing the issues affecting local older people
- Acting as an 'umbrella' group offering advice and support to other 50+ residents and community groups

Since the Hangleton & Knoll 50+ Steering Group formed, they have not only achieved these objectives, but have excelled at them in every instance and gone on to develop new and exciting initiatives to benefit the lives of local older people

This document aims to highlight the reasons behind the group's success and achievements, the impact of the work, and to identify key points and learnings that may be helpful to other areas wanting to establish similar groups across the city



Establishing the Group

Key community figures and Hangleton & Knoll Project staff identified several local older residents as potential Steering Group members and invited them to join. Criteria to consider when establishing membership are:

- Involvement of people who are well known in the community and so are an effective vehicle to communicate information both into and out of the group - Group leaders, committee members and other members of older

people's community groups, members of local Housing Associations, Resident and Street Reps, local Councillors and members of Local Action Teams are all excellent people to have on board

- It is important for membership to be as inclusive as possible to ensure all views can be represented such as those of older disabled, BME and LGBT residents and those living in sheltered accommodation
- Make meetings accessible to all and be aware of any special requirements such as large print documents, interpreters, the acoustics of a room/availability of a hearing loop system
- Resident leadership in meetings and with initiative development and decision making is key but service provider representation is also a principle element of the group
- Service provider presence promotes a useful exchange of information for both parties by: raising awareness of community need; keeping residents abreast of any new services, opportunities and changes to service provision and allows a medium for residents to input feedback and shape the services and initiatives for this age group locally
- The Hangleton & Knoll 50+ Steering Group invited a representative from each key organisation delivering a service to older people in the area
- However, service provider membership is limited to a maximum of seven representatives at any one time to ensure the group remains resident lead
- The Neighbourhood Care Scheme, Older People's Council, BHCC Sheltered Housing, Southern Housing, Anchor Staying Put, The Carers Centre, BHCC Sports Development Team (Active for Life) and Falls Prevention are, or have been, representatives on the group
- Membership fluctuates over time due to changes in funding and role descriptions and due to personal circumstances. It is a fluid entity which needs to be monitored and frequently reviewed
- Accessing new resident members is best done via personal invitation – group members need to be committed to the objectives of the group and prepared to be 'hands on' with moving actions forward

The Journey...

Initial tasks for the new group included establishing a group name and agreeing primary aims, objectives and direction for their work based on the Service Agreement between HKP and BHCC

At the beginning of the project, a large proportion of meeting time was spent discussing these issues which is vital for a group of this nature to foster relationships, understanding and promote teamwork

- It takes time for a new group to gel and for residents and service providers alike to become clear on one another's roles in the community and their organisations
- It also presents the opportunity for members to discover how best to work together making the most of each other's strengths and skills

The group worked together to develop their Terms of Reference which gave members clear guidelines and direction to take their work forward. The document outlines:

- The group's name
- Membership eligibility
- The purpose of the group
- Meeting frequency, duration, Charing arrangements
- Voting procedures and quorum details
- Reporting processes

Year One

Alongside developing their first 'official' document, the group achieved much during their first year of operation:

- An audit of current community groups and local activities for older people
- Identified and addressed gaps in provision resulting in the creation of Gentle Exercise Classes and What's Your Game? a games sessions held at and run by sheltered housing residents
- An audit of services available for older people at local chemists
- Developed a 50+ Website
- Represented the voice of local older people concerning proposed developments at Hove Poly Clinic
- Attended Charing Skills Training
- Began designing a leaflet on local 50+ group and activities



Year Two

During their second year, a Senior Community Development Worker joined the HKP with the specific role of providing community development support to the 50+ Steering Group, other older people's community groups and individual residents.

Until this time, the group had been supported by a variety of staff from HKP and had achieved much together. However, the arrival of a dedicated older people's worker was a significant turning point for the group:

- They could now put their bigger plans - for which they had already done the ground work, into action
- Assign Sub Committees to action various projects and activities of the group
- There was a specific contact to link the Steering Group with other Citywide services, initiatives, events and service providers
- The profile of the 50+ Steering Group could now be raised across the city through the worker's contacts and networking
- The worker was employed specifically to work with this age group and support the Steering Group to address any issues raised

During their second year, the group:

- Inputted into the a Falls Prevention Leaflet produced by the PCT featuring a section specifically advised and requested by the Steering Group on how to get up after a fall
- Designed a logo and branding for the group giving them a clear identity
- Produced a 50+ Activities leaflet which was distributed to 8000 homes as well as at local events and to community buildings
- Established links with Community Action, a significant local decision making group
- Produced an audit of local transport provision having identified lack of transport as a key barrier to participation in activities and meetings
- Visited the Turner & Eastern Road Partnership for advice on setting up a small grants programme and approach to handling applications

- Established a Grant Panel and administered the first of three rounds of a Small Grants Programme entitled '50+ Health & Well Being Grants'
- The grants of up to £200 were designed specifically to promote health and well being among local older people and to benefit local older people's community groups
- Developed relationships with a local sheltered housing scheme to house new art and craft group 'Crafty Adults' with the aim of bringing like minded crafters together as well as encouraging residents to leave their flats and participate
- Fostered links between the Hangleton & Knoll Inclusive Communities Advisory Group, Multi Cultural Women's Group and the 50+ Steering Group
- Established a 50+ Event Sub Committee to plan, organise and deliver an older people's event to launch the 50+ Grant Programme, 50+ Website, 50+ Activities Leaflet and put the Steering Group well and truly on the map!
- The event was a massive success with more than 200 local older people attending
- The focus of the Annual 50+ Launch Event was health, learning, independence and fun and very much a celebration of local older people

- and opportunities for development
- Revising their Terms of Reference
- Administering a further two rounds of 50+ Health & Well Being Grants
- Forming a Trip Committee and liaising with external organisations to plan 5 social trips for local older people
- Attending Events Planning Training
- Organising a second Annual 50+ Event
- Reinforcing links with Community Action with a dedicated 50+ Feedback item on meeting agendas
- Ensuring the voice of local older people was heard concerning potential changes and cuts to the local bus service
- Supporting two new older people's groups to become established by offering advice and financial assistance to The Knollites local history group and the Community Garden Group



- Promoting the group at local community events organised by other groups
- Disseminating information via the 50+ website
- Inputting into the delivery of 50+ Men's Health Screening

Year Three

During year three, the group really got into their stride - they had grown in confidence and recognised what they were capable of. Their fantastic reputation was spreading throughout the community and beyond and the group settled into their role as an umbrella group, steering all 50+ work under this remit and continued to go from strength to strength by:

- Reviewing progress, identifying priorities

Year Four

Progress and achievements have been huge this year particularly concerning sustainability of the group who have:

- Become constituted
- Appointed Officers among their resident members
- Opened a bank account and adopted a Finance & Cash Handling Policy
- Sourced alternative funding from The Derek & Eileen Dodgson Foundation towards their third Annual Event
- Formally accepted a Code of Conduct
- Purchased their own insurance policy

Residents have taken the lead in developing all documentation and procedures discussing their views as a group at each stage. In addition, the group:

- Identified priorities for potential small funding grants which included a 'be prepared' cold weather leaflet, updating the 50+ activities leaflet
- Explored intergenerational working possibilities
- Considered groups under represented among current membership
- Organised a further five trips for local older people
- Contributed feedback to The Scrutiny Panel on the Council's response to the extreme weather at the beginning of the year
- Organised and delivered another fantastic Annual 50+ Event



What have been the group's key achievements so far?

The Steering Group identified the following:

- Trips – during their third and fourth years, 101 local older people have benefited from social outings organised by the group including some of the area's most isolated residents

"It was such a great day out for those of us that don't get out because of being on our own – it seemed like we were on holiday! It was the best trip I have ever had from start to finish – a big thank you to all who had a hand in it"

"(I enjoyed) getting together with other people, the change of scenery and getting away for a while, having a laugh and being able to forget your problems for a while... It can be very lonely if you are 60+ with no one to care – you feel a burden and wouldn't ask for help, but these trips boost our confidence and make us feel young for a while"

- Organisation of three Annual 50+ Events. Residents enjoy a fun, social occasion with free entertainment, beauty therapies and access to key older people's services in a relaxed environment
- Stand holders meet service users face to face in an informal setting which encourages contact and enquiries. At the third annual 50+ event for example, the Stop Smoking Service received 3 new referrals; BHCC Bus Passes made 50 new contacts, 4 people have begun using Community Transport and Age Concern made 25 new contacts and 3 people made appointments to complete will writing packs with a solicitor as a direct result of the event

"(There is) a good atmosphere, relaxed and informal but at the same time professional with a wide range of services and organisations represented (Pension Service)"

"It's nice to be able to get out and meet people of my age group and act young!"

"(Events) help people living alone to meet others in the same boat, make new friends and get out of the four walls for a few hours"

"I can't get out on my own so events like this are a lifeline"

- Administering 3 rounds of 50+ Health & Well Being Grants benefitting 11 local older people's groups. The grants enabled the recipients to purchase equipment, hold events, invite guest speakers etc.
- Partnership working
- Providing local older people with a voice Citywide, ensuring their views are represented in relevant initiatives
- Group support to the many other older people's groups under the Steering Group 'umbrella'

What have been the benefits of the group's work?

The group identified that many of the benefits of their work so far are also their key achievements. In addition the group feel benefits include:

- Reduced feelings of isolation
- Encouraged sense of belonging, engagement and community cohesion
- Information dissemination and raising awareness of 50+ issues, services and community groups

The group identified personal development and skills as a key benefit to them as members of the group



Members feel empowered from gaining a range of new skills including:

- Listening to others
- Improved confidence to take action
- Communication and self awareness
- Increased knowledge
- Event planning

- Experience and input to funding applications
- Food hygiene training
- Caring skills
- Working with large groups of people

They also acknowledged 'keeping the mind active' and finding solutions as a key gains from membership of the group

"It has opened my eyes to other people's problems and it stretches you to find solutions"

"I feel part of a solution and instrumental in action"



What has influenced the success of the group?

Support of a community Development Worker has been essential in working with the group to realise their potential, establish networks, access funding, develop roles, action their individual projects and activities and work towards all aspects of a sustainable future. Other significant factors highlighted by the group include:

- Involvement of local people on the committee
- Team work – good listening skills
- An excellent Chair who 'holds meetings together well'
- Retaining members over time
- Seeing the results and impact of their work
- Meeting in a calm venue



Why is resident involvement important?

Resident involvement is paramount for a group of this nature – member responses speak for themselves

"We are exposed to the problems and issues that affect our age group"

"We see the ongoing results"

"We learn new things and draw on our experience"

"We are part of the community"

"We are giving a contribution back to the community"

"We are achieving our own ambitions"

Next steps

The Steering Group have identified 50+ trips, the 2011 Annual 50+ Event and increasing membership as key priorities to take forward in 2011

The Hangleton and Knoll Project is a Community Development charity based in the Hangleton and Knoll ward of Brighton and Hove, England. A part of the community since 1983 we are a project working *for* the community *with* the community and managed *by* the community.

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