Appendix A: Background Information

Introduction

There are 246,000 older people living in Leeds, of whom around 14,500 are aged over 85. It is estimated that around 15%, or 37,000 older people can be described as lonely or socially isolated, due to factors including fear, living alone, retirement, personal and financial circumstances, the digital divide, public attitudes and ill-equipped outdoor and indoor public spaces.

Time to Shine is a programme, led by older people, that aims to reduce loneliness and social isolation in people over the age of 50. These are major issues, not fully understood, and our job is to learn what makes a difference. Time to Shine works in partnership to deliver activities, training and campaigns across Leeds that celebrate and promote positive ageing. What we learn will help older people live fulfilling lives now and in the future.

The programme is funded by the Big Lottery Fund using National Lottery funding. It is part of 'Ageing Better', which is one of their strategic programmes.

Older people are at the heart of the programme, strongly informing the initial bid and programme plan and continuing to be involved throughout the design, delivery, management and evaluation of the programme.

Time to Shine is managed by Leeds Older People's Forum. The programme is governed by the board of Leeds Older People's Forum and a Core Partnership of cross-sector partners who bring skills and experience including officers from Adults and Health.

Outcomes and Approach

Time to Shine is working towards four outcomes:

- Each year beneficiaries report that they are less isolated as a result of a programme intervention

- Beneficiaries feel confident and able to participate in their communities

- Older people have been actively involved in managing, designing, delivering and evaluating the programme

- Our wider partnership will expand each year and will work better together to coordinate services and support for isolated older people

All Ageing Better areas use a framework and adopt the philosophy of 'test and learn'. Test and learn creates a culture of experimentation. Time to Shine delivery partner projects adopt different approaches based on what older people and their local organisations think will work in reducing social isolation. The projects are evaluated throughout their delivery to learn what works, what doesn't and why. This learning is used to inform future delivery in the programme and beyond. Time to Shine isn't measured solely on outcomes; test and learn is given equal importance.

There are 21 test and learn questions. Examples of those questions include:

- What approaches work best to engage target groups of people most at risk of social isolation and/or loneliness?

- What attracted or motivated people to join in an activity?

- What has worked? What hasn't worked? Why? For whom?

- Have new partnerships been formed? Are organisations working 'better together'?

- Have we reduced the stigma of social isolation and/or loneliness and changed public perceptions? How?

- Have people developed social networks / accessed other services after becoming involved?

This framework maps how projects support the programme approach and enables the gathering of learning in an organized way. It maximises the impact and helps delivery partners to see which outcomes and areas of learning they are contributing to.

This is delivered through six main areas of work:

- Catalysts Projects: must aim to change societal attitudes and behaviours towards older people and reducing social isolation by making it everybody's business.

- Creating Supportive Opportunities Projects: must aim to reach people at home and help people to get out. This builds on our learning that for people with entrenched levels of isolation there needs to be an activity to 'hook' them into a project and that they are likely to need more intensive 'handholding' and practical support before they are ready to engage more widely.

- Connections Projects: must aim to engage with older people from street level up recognising that just bringing people together isn't likely to reduce isolation. This builds on our learning that there needs to be a springboard to more, sustained networks and relationships.

- Capacity Building Projects: must aim to nurture smaller community groups and voluntary sector organisations to develop skills, volunteer bases and increase their knowledge of what tackles social isolation through piloting new approaches. Learning from this strand feeds into the Collecting Evidence strand.

- Co-Production Projects: must aim to ensure that older people will design, manage and deliver activities and engage in the monitoring, evaluation and dissemination of learning from the programme.

- Collecting Evidence: The aim of this strand is to build a credible evidence base that helps Time to Shine, partners, local and national funders and decision makers to better understand what can help tackle or prevent social isolation for people aged 50+.

- Changes Projects: must aim to use learning about the events or circumstances in a person's life that are likely to trigger social isolation. Developing a preventative approach to increase awareness and personal resilience for the future

Priority Groups

The priority groups were established as part of the consultation in 2014 and were included in our programme plan from the beginning.

Evidence suggests that social isolation can happen to anyone and is dependent on a number of factors and life events but the consultation with older people in Leeds told us that the priority groups were particularly vulnerable.

These priority groups were established following extensive consultation with older people and older people's organisations. These groups have been reviewed as part of the preparation for future commissioning with partners and agreed that they remain the priorities. They include:

- People restricted to their home environment (including care homes) through ill-health, disability and dementia

- Carers

- People living alone, coping with personal circumstances which reduce their social networks and confidence (e.g. bereavement, retirement, poverty)

- Those whose social/cultural needs are not fully met (men, BME elders, learning disabled and LGB&T seniors