

A Stitch
in Time?



Pilton Equalities Project
HELPING PEOPLE PARTICIPATE

Pilton Equalities Project Case Study: Evaluation in a community based organisation

Introduction

In the Stitch in Time? programme we identify the role of the third sector in Reshaping Care for Older People.

In addition to an overall model, we are using a range of case studies to showcase particular interventions or types of project.

Each case study consists of two documents: one explaining the model of provision and the other describing the evaluation approach.

In this case study of Pilton Equalities Project (PEP) we focus on one community based organisation providing a range of services to older and other vulnerable people.

This document looks at the approach that PEP takes to evaluation. We highlight some of the challenges. We explain one method and we present some evidence from our evaluation which shows that we are making a difference to older people's lives.



Go to www.evaluationsupportscotland.org.uk for "A Model to explain the third sector contribution to Reshaping Care for Older People"

Background

PEP is a community based organisation based in the north of Edinburgh. We have 14 members of staff and 60 volunteers. We offer a range of services in response to community need.

Like many community based organisations, individuals use the services they want, there is no set route into or pattern of use of services. Take up is very person centred. Multiple services/projects work towards key outcomes around:

- Reducing social isolation
- Building networks in the community
- Maintaining and improving independence
- Optimising quality of life

PEP's mission statement

To enhance the quality of life for older and other vulnerable adults in North Edinburgh by continuing to develop services that enable active community participation, which encourage independence and which measurably reduce isolation.

Evaluation challenges and our approach

In community based organisations, multiple activities feed into the same outcome and multiple outcomes come from the same intervention.

At Pilton Equalities Project, we run wellness workshops, provide informal one to one support and run community events like the May Day Show or the Christmas pantomime. They all feed into the same outcomes. It can be difficult to pick out which intervention leads to which outcome.

We can see the change in individuals over time and this overall evaluation is the key emphasis. Most of our evaluation is informal, checking how people are and if they need any further help or support. This fits with the nature of our ongoing work with people.

To evaluate particular services, we adjust the method to the nature of the work. For more intensive work, we can use a more formal system of evaluation. For example, for our mental health and weekend resource services we use the 'Rickter Scale' as a way of charting people journeys' into well-being. For light touch work we have to be light touch in our evaluation. For example, it would not be appropriate to fill in a detailed questionnaire to assess the impact of the Christmas pantomime on an audience member. We use other simple and engaging methods for example a Christmas tree where people could place comments on baubles, or recording some of the things people say in conversations.

Once a year we survey people who use our services. We have separate surveys for each service. We sit down with people and help them to fill in the answers. See example questionnaire on page 7.

Through this survey we hope to find out

- How people access our services
- How satisfied they are with the way we do things
- Ideas for how we could improve
- If we have made a difference



Go to www.evaluationsupportscotland.org.uk for "Pilton Equalities Project Case Study: A model to explain our activities and outcomes"

Evidence from self-evaluation

Evaluating our May Day show

This show benefitted people putting on the show and the audience. Our evidence of outcomes is simple :

- We count attendance (70 people turned up)
- Thank you cards from the audience *"Thank you for organising the show"; "Thank you for a most enjoyable party"; "The kids were marvellous"*
- We talked to some of the participants and audience after the event.

Findings from our last set of surveys

More than half of the people who use our homecare, gardening and decoration services are registered disabled (approximately 60%), with half from our day care service being registered disabled.

The majority of the day care club members are female and whilst the majority of our mental health services are male.

Qualitative analysis of feedback from older people

The key themes that emerged are

- We help people to have contact with others
- In turn this helps them feel less lonely and have someone to talk to about what's important to them
- It's an encouragement to keep going or try new things (including keeping fit/getting out)
- Practical services reduce anxiety and stress

Ideas for improvement

More variety in activities; more entertainers at clubs; getting younger people involved to liven things up; more visiting times for the home visiting service; prompter service for the gardening; and getting newer buses for the transport service.

Typical quotes and feedback from

Day-care, Neighbourhood Group and weekend resource provision:

"Meet lots of people"

"we'd be very lonely without the clubs"

"it has been lovely - it's been what I needed; without the group I would think too much on things"

"do things I wouldn't have done before"

"when you're having a bad day it's good to come along to"

PEP- wee break:

"I made new friends", "I get more exercise - keeps you fit"

Homecare, gardening and decorating service:

"I rely entirely on the service - it has kept me alive - don't have many other contacts"

"companionship and pushes me to do things I wouldn't want to do normally"

Transport service:

"it's great to get out the house"

"more than anything, I feel like I could live like I used to"

Volunteers:

Individuals commented that volunteering had left them with feelings of wellbeing, had reduced their own social isolation, improved their quality of life, and helped them to maintain independence and stay physically active.

Tips for evaluating this setting

Whilst we want to evidence our work for funders, service users come first. Our top tip is for all staff and volunteers to listen and respond appropriately when they hear something that might affect the service or outcomes for service users.

For example our volunteer bus driver might hear someone say they're not happy with another part of the service or need more help with something (shopping, gardening advice on benefits). That should be passed onto the relevant staff member or volunteer so that appropriate action can be taken.

Where you hear something that suggests an outcome has been met (or not), then it's important to **write it down** and make sure people responsible for reporting to funders get the information. Otherwise it's easy to forget. Sometimes this is done using formal recording systems, but sometimes a quick email or record is enough. We make a lot of use of feedback, quotes and stories. They tell us when things are working and when they could be made better.



PEP Annual monitoring & evaluation form

PEP services

Home visiting & assessment service

1. About the Individual

Gender: Male/ Female

Age range: 20-29 30-39 40-49 50-59 60-69 70-79 80+

Registered Disabled: Yes No

Where do you live?

Ethnic Background/ Nationality:

2. About the Service

How did you hear about PEP's services?

How easy was it for you to access the service? Easy Difficult Very difficult

How do you find:

- Staff and volunteers

Poor Average Excellent

- Reliability of service

Poor Average Excellent

- Overall service

Poor Average Excellent

Any comments about the service?

Do you use any of the other services PEP provides?

3. Making a Difference

Have PEP's services made an impact in any of the following areas?

Feeling of wellbeing	No difference	Some difference	A lot of difference	A great deal of difference
Reducing social isolation	No difference	Some difference	A lot of difference	A great deal of difference
Quality of life	No difference	Some difference	A lot of difference	A great deal of difference
Maintaining independence	No difference	Some difference	A lot of difference	A great deal of difference
Staying physically active	No difference	Some difference	A lot of difference	A great deal of difference

Overall how has home visiting service made a difference to you?

4. Any suggestions?

Is there anything you think PEP could do to improve the service?

Thank you

A Stitch in Time?

A Stitch in Time? is a partnership project to support the third sector to collect and present evidence about its contribution to Reshaping Care for Older People (RCOP). The programme runs from April 2013 to March 2015 and focuses on third sector organisations working with older people and carers in Lothian.

A Stitch in Time? publications



A model to explain the third sector contribution to Reshaping Care for Older People



Focus on third sector interventions that allow older people to stay positive and in control



Indicator Bank for third sector outcomes for older people



Focus on third sector interventions to enable older people to keep or be more financially and materially secure



Focus on third sector interventions that make the physical and social environment more age friendly



Focus on third sector interventions that make the system work better for older people



Focus on third sector interventions to enable older people to keep or be more socially connected



Focus on third sector interventions that ensure healthy and active ageing

To accompany this series there are **evaluation case studies** and a number of **evidence reviews**. To see all publications associated with A Stitch in Time please see Evaluation Support Scotland website.

Evaluation Support Scotland (ESS) works with third sector organisations and funders so that they can measure and report on their impact.



www.evaluationsupportscotland.org.uk

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