

## Ageing Better Middlesbrough

### Introduction

Ageing Better Middlesbrough is a Big Lottery funded programme aimed at reducing loneliness and isolation in Middlesbrough for people aged fifty and over by inspiring current and future generations of people to lead active, healthy and happy lives.

As the lead organisation, Middlesbrough and Stockton Mind has undertaken a significant amount of development activity over the last two years and can announce that we now have delivery partners for all five projects.

### The Vision

We have established a broad vision for Ageing Better Middlesbrough to recognise how ambitious we wanted to be for older people. Our vision is that:

- All older people are valued, active and connected to their communities
- Older people organise and control their own networks providing friendship and mutual support
- Vulnerable older people receive the information and support they need, delivered in a co-ordinated way
- Older people are able to be leaders in their communities and role models to others.

### Ageing Better Value Statements

- Listening to older people and working together to make a difference
- Celebrating who people are and what they can do
- Believing everyone can experience a good quality of life
- Respecting peoples differences, dignity and choices
- Challenging preconceptions and changing attitudes
- Doing what we say we will do

### The Outcomes

The overall success of the programme will be measured by its ability to meet the following outcomes agreed with Big Lottery.

1. Through access to person-centred, co-ordinated support, older people are less socially isolated
2. Through access to person-centred, co-ordinated support, older people have improved mental health
3. Older people have increased confidence to participate in community activities
4. Shared learning through Ageing Better Middlesbrough leads to improvements in wider older people's services

## **The Core Partnership**

The Core Partnership has been in place since November 2013. Core Partnership members have worked together to make decisions, steer the development of the programme and provide governance. The Core Partnership will continue to provide this oversight for the programme over the next six years as the programme develops.

The aims of the Core Partnership are to:

- Enhance, develop and inform the strategy to deliver the project
- Provide contacts and promote partnerships to support the project's aims and objectives
- Identify and act on opportunities to provide added value
- Work together to make lasting improvement which reduce isolation and loneliness in Middlesbrough, and
- Achieve the agreed outcomes of the project.

The Ageing Better Middlesbrough Core Partnership currently has 12 members in addition to the lead partner, from a range of sectors, these are:

**Older people** - represented by 3 members of the Ageing Better Middlesbrough Advisory Group. The role of the Advisory Group is to ensure and facilitate the engagement of older people in planning and decision making processes for Ageing Better Middlesbrough, and provide information, advice and guidance on the design, delivery and evaluation of Ageing Better Middlesbrough. The Advisory Group was established in January 2014.

**Voluntary sector** - represented by Aapna Services, Guide Dogs for the Blind Association, Middlesbrough Environment City, Middlesbrough Voluntary Development Agency and Together Middlesbrough and Cleveland.

**Statutory sector** partners - Middlesbrough Council and South Tees Clinical Commissioning Group.

**Academic and evaluation partner** - Teesside University

**Private sector partner** – a new partner is currently being sought

## **The Target Group**

We used the evidence from our research and consultation to identify the following target groups for Ageing Better Middlesbrough in the first two years.

- Older people living alone, including those who are bereaved or divorced and those with partners in care
- Older people with health problems or disability, including physical health (including dementia, addictions and long term conditions), mental health problems, learning disabilities and sensory impairment, and
- Older carers, including older carers of younger people.

With the support of Middlesbrough Public Health, we mapped risk factors for isolation and the local older population. Alongside asset mapping of community-based social activities, we used this information to identify the initial geographical target areas for Ageing Better Middlesbrough. In the first 2 years, these will be 11 of the 23 wards in Middlesbrough as follows: Pallister, Beckfield, Gresham, Park, University, Beechwood, Clairville, Ladgate, Coulby Newham, Hemlington and Kader.

### **What Ageing Better will do**

Our model of delivery for Ageing Better Middlesbrough contains three specific elements: intervention; prevention; and communication.

#### **Intervention** – Outreach, Peer Friendship and Psychological Therapies

These three projects will work together to identify, engage and support the loneliest and most isolated older people in the eleven identified wards in Middlesbrough, targeting those with health issues/disabilities, those who live alone and those who are carers. The aim of this work is to support people to overcome the practical and emotional barriers which prevent them from being more involved in their communities. The support we provide will enable people to engage in their communities, including other Ageing Better Middlesbrough activities.

The Outreach Project will be delivered by Middlesbrough and Stockton Mind. This project is expected to commence in March 2016.

The Peer Friendship Project will be delivered by ACTES and Volunteering Matters. This project commenced in December 2015.

The Psychological Therapies project will be delivered by Middlesbrough and Stockton Mind. This project is expected to commence in March 2016.

#### **Prevention** – Community Development, Volunteer Development, Digital Inclusion

This team will work to increase the number and variety of community activities/groups available to older people in the priority neighbourhoods, including ensuring activities/groups are accessible, well promoted and inclusive. They will increase awareness and understanding of loneliness and isolation and facilitate community action to tackle these issues. They will work with whole communities, but prioritise older people at risk of loneliness and isolation, to harness their skills and potential as volunteers and community champions. They will increase the number, skills and confidence of local people involved in community action and activity.

A partnership between MVDA and The Hope Foundation will be delivering the Community Development Project. Community Development started delivery in August 2015.

#### **Communication** – the Network

The Ageing Better Middlesbrough Network will be the hub of communication and information about activities and opportunities relevant to older people. All projects will feed information back to the Network about community activity and community groups available to older people, involvement and volunteering opportunities and

good news stories. The Network will operate a membership model for older people in Middlesbrough and offer choice to people about how they would like to receive information. It will have an online and social media presence. All of the Network activities will be co-designed with older people.

The Network Project will be delivered by Middlesbrough and Stockton Mind. This project started delivery/development in May 2015.

### **The approach**

All of the projects in the Ageing Better Middlesbrough Programme will use an Asset Based Community Development Approach (ABCD). This is an approach based on the principle of identifying and mobilising individual and community 'assets', rather than focusing on problems and needs (i.e. 'deficits').

"As well as having needs and problems, our most marginalised communities also have social, cultural and material assets. Identifying and mobilising these can help them overcome the health challenges they face...The more familiar 'deficit' approach focuses on the problems, needs and deficiencies in a community such as deprivation, illness and health-damaging behaviours. It designs services to fill the gaps and fix the problems. As a result, a community can feel disempowered and dependent; people can become passive recipients of services rather than active agents in their own and their families' lives." (Foot and Hopkins, 2010, p7)

ABCD is a set of values and principles which:

- Identifies and makes visible the health-enhancing assets in a community
- Sees citizens and communities as the co-producers of health and well-being, rather than the recipients of services
- Promotes community networks, relationships and friendships that can provide caring, mutual help and empowerment
- Identifies what has the potential to improve health and well-being
- Supports individuals' health and well-being through self- esteem, coping strategies, resilience skills, relationships, friendships, knowledge and personal resources
- Empower communities to control their futures and create tangible resources such as services, funds and buildings

(Foot and Hopkins, 2010)

### **Partnership Working**

The vision for Ageing Better is that all the different projects will work cohesively together, communicating and sharing information effectively. Projects will share responsibility for delivering the programme outcomes, which means that delivery partners must be able to demonstrate a commitment to partnership working.

## **Test and Learn**

It is vital that all delivery partners involved in the Ageing Better Middlesbrough Programme are committed to the 'test and learn' approach that will enable better understanding of what works to tackle loneliness and isolation locally and nationally. This is an important focus of the Big Lottery investment. This means that at all levels the programme will be;

- Continually seeking feedback from its beneficiaries
- Collecting and analysing detailed information about project activity and outcomes
- Responding and changing what we deliver as we learn more about the people who access the different projects and their skills and interests
- Working closely with Teesside University who are undertaking the local evaluation and Ecorys who are the organisation commissioned by the Big Lottery to undertake the national evaluation

The programme is not just about achieving outcomes, it's also about what we did to achieve outcomes and the learning and insights from the programme over the six year period.

## **Involving older people**

Ageing Better Middlesbrough is committed to ensuring that older people lead and shape the programme as it develops.

We believe the meaningful involvement of older people takes more than providing a menu of formal involvement opportunities. We are interested in working with delivery partners who are committed to the values which underpin meaningful involvement and can translate this into the creation of formal and informal opportunities for older people to get involved and have a voice.