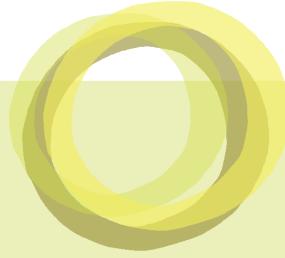




Supporting older  
people to stay in  
their communities



# What is in this report



- About these events
- Policy Context
- Building Community Capacity in Highland Perthshire
- Chain Reaction in Newcastle
- Learning from the lives of older people in Inverclyde
- Get Together Groups in East Renfrewshire
- Other support and developments across Scotland
- Common achievements and challenges
- Ways to tell people what is there
- Evidence of impact
- What does an older people-friendly community look like?
- What next

## About these events

In 2014 we held a series of events around including older people with higher support needs. We shared examples and experience on:

- Participation by older people, including people with higher support needs
- Physical exercise and keeping well
- Being part of the community
- People from the local community coming into care homes and people who live in care homes and their neighbours doing things together
- Creating and sustaining community-based services and supports
- Maintaining people's connections

You can read the report from these events here <http://www.wisdominpractice.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/wereheretoosummaryreport-1.pdf>

People said they would like to catch up in a year or so to hear what had happened. That is happening through the 2 events in Falkirk and Greenock and sharing information continues through this report.

These are some of the actions and impacts people have told us about that have happened as a result of the previous discussions and report.

- People were inspired by Denise Fagg and the ideas she and other people shared on ways to help people who live in care homes be more active. They have started doing more physical activities with people they know – from one person in their own family to hundreds of people in touch with care services.
- People are taking different approaches to hearing the views of older people, to help them reach more people.
- People started asking different questions about participation by people who have higher support needs, and asking them more often.
- People got in touch with people they met at the events, to learn more about their services and activities in that community.
- It encouraged people to bring more community activities into care homes, and to make more opportunities for people living in care homes to be part of things happening in the community.
- People are holding their own We're Here Too events, bringing together people in their local area.

"The main lesson I took away was that it was ok to sit with someone and have a conversation with them instead of doing formal feedback surveys. We've been doing this with people in our service and it works. What we hear is helping us make things better for the people we support."

"I now go for a slow, gentle walk with my mum each weekend. We're both enjoying it and feeling the benefits."

"We checked out the Golden Games events and have introduced them in our service, with much enjoyment."

## Thanks

We want to thank everyone who contributed to the events.

We're Here Too is supported by a grant from the Scottish Government Equalities Programme.

The My Day My Way project also contributed to the costs of the event.





# Policy context

These are some of the ways the ideas and examples we heard about at our 2015 events link into the policy and practice issues people are working on now and over the next few years.

## SDS and Personalisation

- There are examples of ways services and other support that is different from traditional approaches can work well for people, including people with higher support needs.
- People are learning ways to give older people real choices, including ways to make the assessment and planning process work well for them.
- Older people have ideas on the sorts of supports they want and that will achieve good outcomes for them, including using ordinary services and community supports in ways that will let people's support budgets go further.

## Integration

- There are examples of ways health and social care teams and services come together.
- People described how the joint or linked services can work with the voluntary sector, family and neighbours and ordinary community supports to create even better outcomes for people.

## Innovative approaches

- We heard about examples of co-production, where older people are part of planning, designing and/or delivering services.
- There are micro-enterprises supporting older people and ways to help ensure these work well and are sustainable.
- There are lots of examples of people developing partnerships to create and deliver new and better supports for older people.

# Building Community Capacity in Highland Perthshire

Fiona Johnstone, Community Engagement Worker, PKAVS and Gillian Gilchrist, Heartland Befriending

This work is based around Pitlochry, which is a small town with a population of 2,500 people, and the surrounding rural area. There is a high number of older people: 35% are of pensionable age and 14% are aged 75 and over, which is double the Scottish average. The distances and scattered population has made it difficult to bring in a range of care providers and most services are provided by the Council.

The project began in 2013. It brought together PKAVS (Perth and Kinross Association for Voluntary Services, the Council and NHS, IRISS (Institute for Research and Innovation in Social Services) and GrowBiz, which develops new social enterprises in the area.

There were 4 workshops, to help people identify what the gaps were and what local people might contribute. They asked 3 questions:

- 1 How can we better support people in Pitlochry?
- 2 What could the caring Pitlochry look like in future?
- 3 How can we make it happen?

Students from Duncan of Jordanstone College helped with an in-depth asset mapping exercise – which was really useful as this area has 130 community groups. It showed the local assets and opportunities for taking on people's ideas.

There was seed funding to help get new ideas off the ground - £10,000 in total for small project ideas that would deliver care and support, and that were led by people living within a 10 mile radius of Pitlochry. The project funded 6 pilot projects: Herbalist, Resource Library for the Community, Sensory Garden, Arts and Craft Club, Reiki for Carers, and Heartland Befriending.

There is a project blog and more information about all the projects that were developed at <http://blogs.iriss.org.uk/pitlochry/>

Gillian started Heartland Befriending.

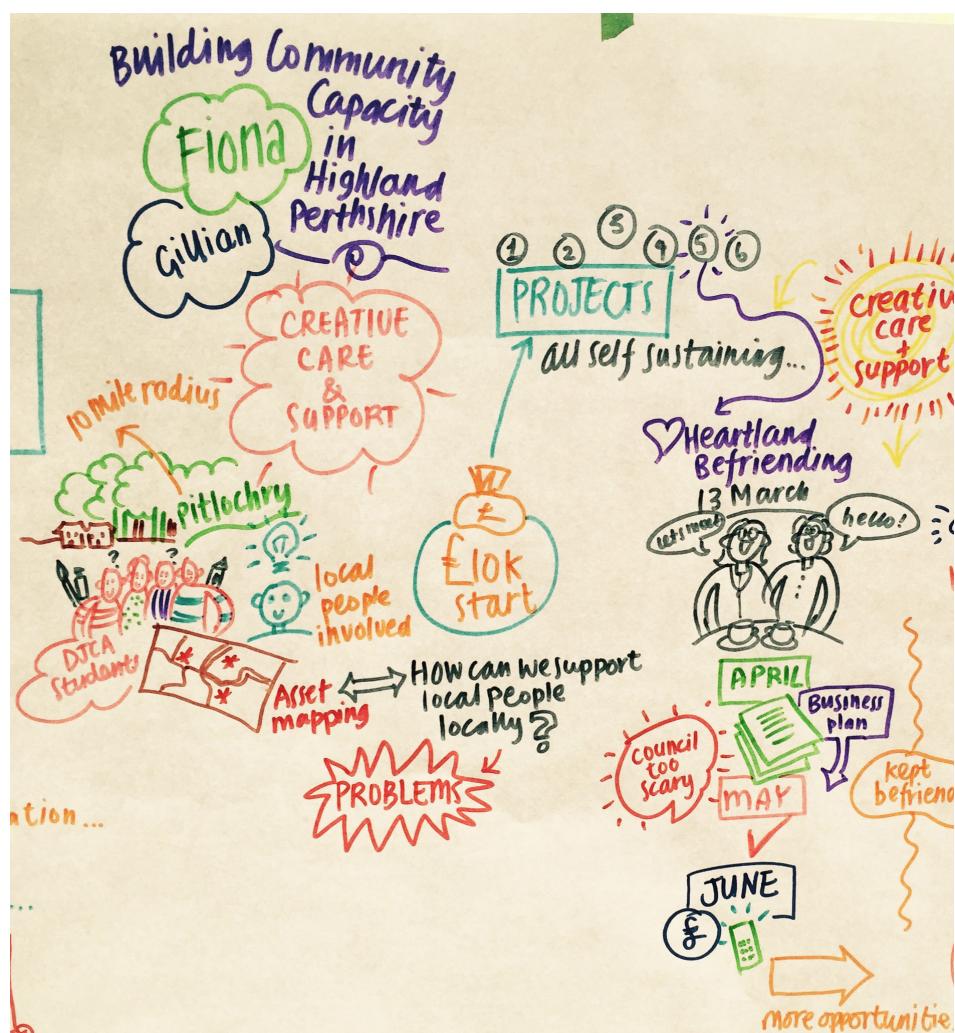
- She had experience of befriending and had an idea that this could help older people in the area who were socially isolated, but didn't know how to take it forward.
- Someone put Gillian in touch with Fiona and everything took off from there. The thought of talking to the Council was scary but a chat with Fiona was easy.

- Fiona introduced her to GrowBiz and they helped her work out a Business Plan. She got the start-up money and got going.
- A recent development is GrowBiz bringing together Gillian and other people who are working on other small services to learn from and support each other.

## Contact

Fiona Johnstone  
 Community Engagement Worker (Health and Social Care)  
 Third Sector and Volunteering Hub, PKAVS  
 01738 567076  
[fiona.johnstone@pkavs.org.uk](mailto:fiona.johnstone@pkavs.org.uk)  
[www.vaperthshire.org](http://www.vaperthshire.org)

You can read more about micro enterprises and how they can benefit older people in the Hints and Tips at the Wisdom in Practice website. Wisdom in Practice brings together work that Outside the Box is doing with older people:  
[www.wisdominpractice.org.uk/hints-and-tips-resources/](http://www.wisdominpractice.org.uk/hints-and-tips-resources/)



# Chain Reaction in Newcastle

Kirsty Morgan and Catriona Hackney, KeyRing

The story of this project began 3 years ago, when KeyRing was asked to develop support for older people in Newcastle.

KeyRing provides support for people with disabilities. The model is based on a network of people who live close to each other in their own flats and houses and support each other. KeyRing began 25 years ago and there are now over 100 networks across England and Wales supporting over 900 people.

Each network has a volunteer living nearby plus support from other people in their area and staff at KeyRing. This is what a typical network looks like.

Chain Reaction began when staff at Newcastle Council were looking for a different approach to day opportunities for older people. The KeyRing approach can work with people in other circumstances, and KeyRing led a pilot project in a few areas. It used existing resources differently and created new groups where there were gaps.

There are 3 elements to Chain Reaction:

- 1 Individual personalised support
- 2 Connecting people to things in their community
- 3 Connecting people to other members and creating a network of natural support.

Together this reduces social isolation. It is all led by older people and what they want – which has thrown up some surprises.

The next stage came when Newcastle Council decided to roll out the service to all of Newcastle.

- KeyRing is now one of 3 service providers and together they provide the Chain Reaction service across the city.
- The providers bring different experience and are learning from and helping each other, sharing skills and knowledge.
- They are developing a new preventative service and working with a wider group of people aged 55 and over.
- There is a higher level of support for people who want that, such as help with domestic tasks, budget planning and help with using other services.
- It is very clear what each level of service costs, and this works well both for people getting support through the Council and for people when they or their family organise and pay for support.

The feedback from the older people is that this gives them a good quality of life, keeps them as part of their community, and gives them the support they want.

For services, this is preventing people needing other services and is complementing services that support people who have extra needs.

## Contacts

Kirsty Morgan 07779 297875

Kirsty.Morgan@keyring.org

[www.keyring.org](http://www.keyring.org)

Catriona Hackney 07917 68658

[info@chainreaction-newcastle.co.uk](mailto:info@chainreaction-newcastle.co.uk)

[www.chainreaction-newcastle.co.uk](http://www.chainreaction-newcastle.co.uk)

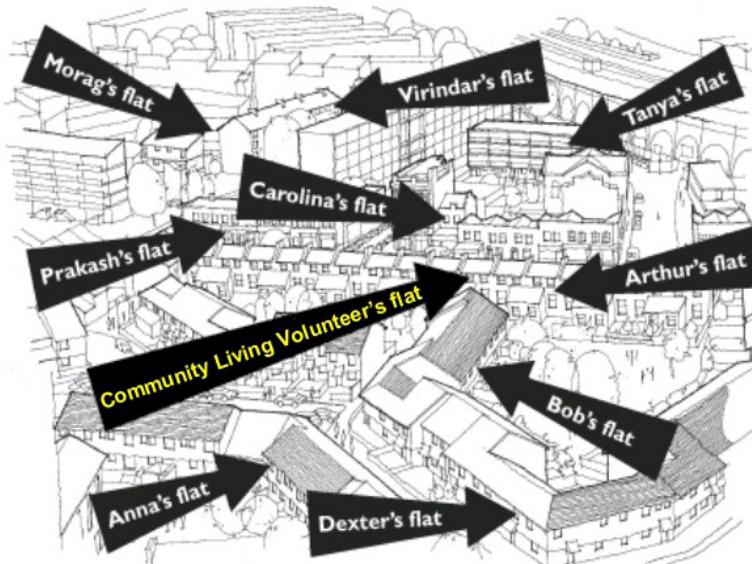
In Scotland, the people doing the same work as KeyRing are Neighbourhood Networks. So far they are supporting networks of people with disabilities and of people with mental health problems. They are keen to discuss how they can also use their experience to support older people.

## Contacts

0141 440 1005

[info@neighbourhoodnetworks.org](mailto:info@neighbourhoodnetworks.org)

[www.neighbourhoodnetworks.org](http://www.neighbourhoodnetworks.org)



## What we can each contribute

Kirsty and Catriona asked participants to think of what they could contribute to the lives of older people – in a personal or in a professional role.

We repeated this at the Greenock event.

The list of our possible contributions is on the We're Here Too page at Wisdom in Practice: [www.wisdominpractice.org.uk/were-here-too/](http://www.wisdominpractice.org.uk/were-here-too/)

What this shows is how each person can contribute something, and all these small contributions join up to create something bigger.

Enjoy thinking about what you can contribute.



# Learning from the lives of older people in Inverclyde

In Greenock we heard from 3 people who are part of Your Voice.

Nell McFadden has been involved in the local Elderly Forum since it began 27 years ago. She first got involved when she was 61 and her doctor told her to go and get involved in her community. She wasn't sure what her community was, but the Council was looking for people to start a forum as a voice for older people and that was a good place to start.

"When I retired I found it very difficult and suffered from depression. I went to see my doctor, expecting to be given some form of medication or pills. But instead, I was told to get out into the community and take part in things and get involved to the best of my ability. It took me a while to get my head round this, but once I did I never looked back."

These are some of the things that have happened since then.

- The Forum is still going.
- Nell became the chair and was active in local activities. They have made a difference on many issues affecting older people.
- She also got involved in the Community Care Forum - now called Your Voice - and the Carers' Centre to help tackle issues that affect many people living in Inverclyde.
- The Forum also got involved in national campaigns and groups. Nell was the person - or one of the people - who went from Inverclyde to meetings in London, marches with banners in the rain outside political parties' meetings, and many other ways to raise the concerns of older people.
- The Inverclyde Forum has been recognised and received the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service, and Nell was awarded the MBE.
- Over the years they got lots of publicity, partly because they developed a good relationship with the local newspaper, local radio station and the like.

Years ago Nell and other people at Your Voice decided to do something about older people being lonely. They got a lot of groups going. Some examples are: Tai-chi, walking groups, cooking, book groups, computer classes and much more. The groups are making a big difference for many people. The risk now is that some of these groups will fold if there is no further money.

You can read more about the Forum at [www.yourvoice.org.uk](http://www.yourvoice.org.uk)

"I didn't know how to do all this when I started. We learned about it as we went along."

"If you do something for people, they will support you back."

"I have been to the Palace twice for awards, have been invited to 10 Downing Street too. I'm an ordinary wee woman. I didn't expect any of this."

"Everyone gets lonely sometimes - we talk about it now which is really good. We didn't used to talk about these things but it's better that we do."

"I have my family, and my other family is the community, the people and the groups I know and belong to. They have been there for me when I needed them."

Frank Dunlop told us about how his trolley has kept him independent since he had a stroke.

- He uses it to let him do the housework, laundry, cook for himself and other chores around the house
- It helps him get out, as he can walk with it
- The top shelf is great for watering house plants
- He uses it to fix the neighbour children's toys
- He takes the rubbish out for recycling
- It has his communication system – the phone and his personal alarm in case he ever needs help
- He has his 'command centre' on the bottom shelf – a basket that has all the equipment of a mini office, to let him continue to be involved in all sorts of community activities.

This is an example of how a small piece of equipment – which is not expensive – can have a huge impact on someone's life. The outcomes are the person having real choices in where and how they live, and continuing to be contributing and part of their community.

You can see photographs of Frank and his trolley in his presentation, which is on the Outside the Box slideshare [www.slideshare.net/  
Outsidetheboxglasgow/frank-dunlop](http://www.slideshare.net/Outsidetheboxglasgow/frank-dunlop)

Martin Blaine is a volunteer with Your Voice. He told us about how he keeps well and gets a lot of enjoyment from walking.

In all the jobs he did when we was working he was too busy getting on with the work to stop and look around. Now he is retired and is walking in areas where he worked. But now he is able to enjoy their beauty and learn about the history and much more.

Having a bus pass opens up even more interesting places, all easy to reach from where he lives. It is the same for other people in the areas where they live.

His message to other people is to stop and enjoy the places and people who are around you.

"Make time to get out enjoy yourself. It won't happen if you don't."

# Get Together Groups in East Renfrewshire

Alan Stevenson, East Renfrewshire Integrated Health and Social Care Partnership

Alan described at one of the 2014 events how the Get Together Groups in East Renfrewshire had got underway. People enjoyed his presentation so much that we asked him back to share the experience from East Renfrewshire with more people.

The Get Together Groups began when the Council and NHS were looking for a way to give older people who needed daytime support more choices other than the traditional approach of day centre places. People wanted places to go that were local, friendly and to be involved in planning their activities.

Each Get Together Group grew from approaching a service that was already supporting older people – such as a care home or sheltered housing unit – and asking if they would become a base for activities for residents and for other people living nearby. At most of the services the residents said yes, because it gave more opportunities for the people who lived there as well as those referred to the Health and Social Care Partnership – so everyone was winning.

This is how the partners and activities grew over 2 months:



The Get Together groups are achieving what they set out to do: giving individual people more choice, being part of a group led by older people and creating many positive benefits for all taking part. The feedback and outcomes from those taking part and their families is very positive. The groups are also benefitting other people, such as the school children who are learning about knitting and people's war experiences and people learning English who want to practice their language skills.

It's all about relationships - people choose to come to the activities. Now the groups tend to be made up of 50% residents from the partner's complex and 50% other people who need more company and support. Because the group is local, people often know each other or have known each other in the past.

This is what has happened since 2014:

- The groups are still going and new groups have got underway ( now seven in total).
- They are still supported by the partners and volunteers.
- They are continuing to add new activities as people come up with new ideas.
- The support has improved the outcomes and quality of life for the people taking part, and often for their carers and relatives as well.
- It has taken pressure off the Social Work and Health Services and enabled them to give support to people who need that intervention.
- People are benefiting from the connections and friendships that they made through the groups and spin-off activities.

The Get Together Groups complement other developments in East Renfrewshire, such as working with local communities to increase people's awareness and confidence around including supporting people with dementia.

"We learned that you can't predict what will happen and that the most creative ideas just emerge from people having conversations and someone saying 'let's try it'"

"Things flow - ideas grow and develop. You start off with one thing and you end up with something different!"

"Everyone in East Renfrewshire is now a 10 minute drive away from a Get Together Group."

## Contact

Alan Stevenson

[alan.stevenson@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk](mailto:alan.stevenson@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk)

# Other support and developments across Scotland

Over the past year or so there have been lots of developments in support for older people in Scotland. These are examples that people described at the event or told us about. We know that there is more happening in many other places too.

**My Day My Way** is helping older people who have dementia to have more choice and control in their lives through the use of Self-directed support. It is a partnership between Scottish Care, Dementia Scotland and local authorities including Falkirk Council.

It is building more participation and choice into existing services.  
It is developing new models of day opportunities that are flexible and work around each older person.

The project will be developing a new website to give people who provide or arrange services more information on how to use SDS to achieve more choices for people.

## Contact

Yvonne Stewart 07453 707227  
[yvonne@mydaymyway.org.uk](mailto:yvonne@mydaymyway.org.uk)

Caroline Brown  
[caroline@mydaymyway.org.uk](mailto:caroline@mydaymyway.org.uk)

<https://www.facebook.com/MyDayMyWay2015>

**Make it Happen** is the collective voice for older people across Falkirk and district. These are some of the things they have helped make happen over the past year.

- Moving Assistance: developing tips to help older people make decisions about moving home and find the right practical help if they do want to move. This is a partnership with Falkirk Council and Outside the Box.
- Closure of public toilets is a big worry for people in lots of places. In Falkirk the proposal from the Council was to close all the public toilets. Make it Happen put together a report to show the Council other options and have proposed a 'comfort break' scheme.
- Belly dancing in care homes: Make it Happen and Outside the Box organised a pilot to introduce belly dancing as a way to give people in care homes something that brings in the community, is good fun and helps people's balance and mobility.

- Transport: Make it Happen campaigned to have a bus route changed. First Bus listened and made the change.
- People said that life long learning was a priority for them. Older people who are part of Make it Happen got together and worked with other people. A local branch of the University of the Third Age (U3A) is now in place and thriving.

## Contact

[www.makeithappenforum.org.uk](http://www.makeithappenforum.org.uk)

**Braveheart in Falkirk** provides walking groups for people with long-term health conditions. These give people company and friendships and well as the benefits from being active.

They are now also offering Braveheart plus groups, which give longer term support, and Healthy Activity/stress management support.

**Stirling Carers' Centre** has been finding out what is needed. There are more support groups for adult carers in Stirling and the other towns. They are now looking at the needs of older people and their carers in very rural areas.

**SolConnect in Lanarkshire** – Solutions for Ordinary Living – is a support and care organisation that provides personalised support at home to people with disabilities, including older people, who need high levels of support. They have been developing new ways of giving support at different times, to fit the care around people's lives. This includes the possibility of digital and social media as solutions being part of the mix, creating more choice for individuals. SolConnect is the digital and social media part of their work.

Ideas for future developments include a carers' network that will work online and supporting people to use this technology as another way of keeping in touch.

## Contact

[www.forliving.org/sol-connect](http://www.forliving.org/sol-connect)

**Paths for All** has recently started a 3-year project funded by The Life Changes Trust, to develop their existing walking networks to be dementia friendly. This will support people with dementia and their carers.

## Contact

[www.pathsforall.org.uk/pfa/news/walking-brings-benefits-to-people-with-dementia.html](http://www.pathsforall.org.uk/pfa/news/walking-brings-benefits-to-people-with-dementia.html)

New Men's Sheds are getting underway or are being planned in many places. This is a very successful approach to support that many men enjoy and find helpful – blokes getting together to do practical things and have company and some peer support along the way.

In the Falkirk Shed there is an Unfinished Objects Group. People can bring their unfinished objects to this group of men who are retired and have the skills to finish the work and give back completed objects that people can use. The group share their skills and knowledge as they work together.

## Contact

There is more about Men's Sheds, what they do and how they work at:  
<http://www.wisdominpractice.org.uk/mens-activities-and-issues-2/>  
<http://www.scottishmsa.org.uk>  
<http://www.ageuk.org.uk/scotland/about-us/our-work/community-services/mens-sheds/>

## Dementia awareness in Inverclyde

Alzheimer Scotland has development works in each part of Scotland. These are some of the things that Tracy Gilmour has been developing in Inverclyde.

Three churches are working together to develop services that work well for people with dementia. Examples are services that always follow a similar pattern, shorter services and hymns that people remember from their youth.

Tracy asked Tesco if they would donate bottles of water for the Memory Walk. That led to the manager asking her to provide dementia awareness training for the staff at the store. Hundreds of staff have come along and this has led to people being more confident in supporting customers, relatives and other people they know who have dementia.

Dementia Friends has been good for families of people who have been diagnosed with dementia. One 7 year old told his class about dementia after his grandpa was diagnosed.

That led to Tracy doing more work with the children in that school. That in turn led to children meeting up with people who come to the Dementia Centre during the day, which has meant a lot to the people with dementia.

## Contact

Tracy Gilmour, Dementia Advisor  
[tgilmour@alzscot.org](mailto:tgilmour@alzscot.org)

## Roar - Connections for Life, Renfrewshire

Roar has a network of 12 clubs across Renfrewshire, plus other activities and projects that give people opportunities to meet other people and enjoy themselves. The benefits are people not being socially isolated or lonely and protecting their mental and physical health and wellbeing.

Positive Steps is a Falls Prevention scheme that was developed by NHS Ayrshire and Arran. Roar are proving this in Renfrewshire. They are also promoting the One Legged Wobble challenge, to raise awareness about how important good balance is for everyone.

Check it out and take the challenge!

## Contact

<http://www.roarforlife.org/positivesteps/>  
[www.roarforlife.org](http://www.roarforlife.org)

## Developments in NHS and Council services

We heard of ways teams are changing how they work and making links with colleagues and with other organisations to improve the care they give to people. Examples include:

- Community-based link workers to give people information about the range of public sector and community supports that are available.
- NHS staff and staff in voluntary organisations shadowing each other, to learn more about what each team can offer.
- Faster support from the wide range of therapists and allied health professionals.
- Teams looking at ways to make each person's 'journey' through health care and especially hospital care easier for them and their family.
- Encouraging local day services for older people across a Council area to link up and learn together about more ways to involve people and build links with the community.
- More support for people to keep well and prevent ill-health
- Red Cross working with A&E services in Glasgow to prevent unnecessary hospital admissions.
- Voluntary organisations working with health services to get the low-level practical supports that enable people to get home more quickly.

# What is happening where you are?

23 SEPT  
2015  
FALKIRK



# Common achievements and challenges

People from different places described similar experiences and the impact of what they were doing.

- Older people are making a contribution in peer support roles and as volunteers.
- People are getting a lot of benefits, including people with higher support needs. The main impacts are in more social connections and improved mental wellbeing.
- There are benefits for people's physical health and wellbeing when they are more active and looking after themselves.

They also see similar challenges.

- Funding feels a problem, with many good community services managing on very short-term grants or charitable funding
- It can be hard for people to get continuity of support when services are uncertain.

Some groups have planned activities on the basis that any support from public services or charitable sources will be uncertain.

- They are asking people for a small financial contribution and being self-supporting.
- They are keeping the service small and not expanding too far.

Transport is an issue for many groups, and for many older people.

- Accessible, low-cost transport that enables older people to get out from their homes and take part in clubs and other community activities is a real gap in many areas.
- Where local activities can share transport, there are many benefits for both the services in reducing costs and making more activities viable
- There are even more benefits for the people who take part – less social isolation, keeping in touch with existing friends and interests, and having choices in what they do.
- Public transport often does not work for people with sight loss or other disabilities, who can just give up and stop trying to get about
- Bus times can make it impossible for people to take part in activities

"We're aiming to make everything we do sustainable, so it will continue if the current funding ends."

"The most important thing we do is listen to what older people want and how life looks for them."

"Our philosophy is to focus on the little changes that make a big difference."

"One challenge many groups have is should we do more for people who are no longer able to come to us?"

"We are doing group person-centred planning with small groups of older people. We focus on people's gifts, skills and contributions. It's about (real) inclusion, removing labels, connecting people, giving and receiving. This way people encourage each other for more creative supports and services."



"It's having a good cup of coffee and nice biscuits or cakes. Not the cheap stuff that says 'you don't matter'."

# Ways to tell people what is there

Many people raised the challenge of reaching all the older people who could benefit from all the groups and activities that are there in each local area.

"Everyone gets lonely. There are services there that will give people positive things to do and places to find friends. But people are missing out because they don't know that all these good services are there."

"We've achieved a lot in making more opportunities for older people. The next challenge is how we get the information about all this to people who are isolated."

These are the main points that people agreed were the way forward.

- There is no one solution. We need a lot of ways to share information to increase the likelihood of reaching every person.
- People need encouragement as well as information.
- The people who have most need of the information and encouragements are the people who have greatest need - people who have few if any existing social connections, or who have low confidence or more problems limiting their access to what is there.
- Doing more to involve older people in our communities is important, and we need to keep working at it.

This is the range of routes that people suggested - ones they use already and others people can try.

- Word of mouth - people telling their friends and neighbours.
- Workers who spread information and support - lots of different roles and job titles, and task is relevant for them all.
- Information from organisations such as Your Voice - newsletters, leaflets, emails for individual people, and more.
- Stories in the local newspapers, showing how people benefit.
- Regular items with contact details and times and places activities are happening.
- Databases of community activities - many Council areas now have this.
- ALISS database.
- Items in newsletters of general community groups - churches, hobby/interest groups, etc.
- Charity shops in town centres.
- Leaflets about services.
- Magazines that are aimed at older people, such as Get Up and Go magazine in Edinburgh.
- Walking groups, as people share lots of information as they walk together.
- Services that are aimed at promoting wellbeing for older people - voluntary sector and health service.

- Community Councils – members telling people and getting into their information routes.
- Specialist voluntary sector projects and organisations for people with sight impairments, hearing impairments, disabilities etc.
- Someone talking to people while they are at clinics and telling them about all the other services that might be useful for them: this is in addition to putting up posters in waiting rooms.
- Items in talking newspapers.
- Local radio.
- The new community television channels that are opening up.
- Groups for people in BME communities.
- Newspapers and other media that is for people in BME communities or for people using other languages.
- Pop-up stalls in supermarkets and shopping centres to get people's attention and talk to them, plus information boards to follow up.
- Posers and leaflets in chemists, post offices, libraries, garages – anywhere.
- Libraries – information about services, plus useful books on managing your health and stories of people who are coping with their lives.
- Social media.
- Carers' centres.
- Places where families and friends of older people will see information.

"Sit and talk to people in waiting rooms. For example, people at an eye clinic are likely to be interested in equipment to help them at home. And they may also want things that can help their balance, or for people who find it difficult to grip things."

"Meeting people and chatting also gives us information."

"Volunteers in lots of projects learning what other projects can offer as well as their own"

"We need to just accept that directories always need constant updating. That's how life is."

"Peer support. People hearing the experiences and suggestions of other older people has much more impact than just hearing about it from health and social work staff."

"Our elderly citizens should be treasured and respected."

# Evidence of impact

People who work in or alongside community services and supports know that they work well. But it feels that some of the people making decisions are not as aware of the impact community services and supports can have.

- We know that there are community-based projects, such as ones that started as part of Reshaping Care for Older People, that have had a big local impact but are now struggling to get continued funding.
- Senior staff who have different backgrounds and experience may be more familiar with a type of evidence - such as random controlled trials - that is not as relevant or possible here.
- People often do not know about the long-term tracking and big-scale evaluations that were done for similar types of services in other places.

Outside the Box has brought together a summary of research studies and other reports that have evidence of the impact of these types of services. It is called Building community-based support with older people and there are links to the full reports for people who want more details. You can read it at: <http://www.wisdominpractice.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/buildingcommunitybasedsupportwitholderpeople23.pdf>

What the research shows is that the types of support that older people want do work very well. It shows that their judgement is good.

- These supports give people a good quality of life.
- They keep people well and prevent or reduce further difficulties for people.
- They prevent or delay people needing more intensive support.

These types of support also work well for public services and resources.

- They cost less than conventional approaches and save money.
- They help specialist services reach the people who need them more quickly.
- Overall, they help the public resources go further and benefit more people.

One example is Sloppy Slipper projects. Lots of older people wear sloppy slippers, which they have had for a while, have slippy soles and don't fit snugly. Sloppy slippers are one of the factors that increase the chance of someone falling at home. These projects give older people who are at risk nice new slippers that fit well - they happen through Health Promotion services and voluntary groups, for example.

Some of these older people would have fallen, while others would have been ok - but we don't know in advance who they are. So is this good value for money?

In Dorset they had an evaluation of the impact of sloppy slipper schemes where they tracked the impact of preventative community services over 8 years.

They found that if a sloppy slipper project reaches 3,000 people and prevents one person from falling and breaking her hip, the savings on health services are more than the cost of the whole project.

## What does an older people-friendly community look like?

Care services and other supports are there to help people have a good quality of life and be as well as they can be. For most people, that means being part of their community.

Community supports and opportunities that work well for older people contribute to older people having a good life. They also complement care and support services, to help the overall resources – skill and experience as well as money – go further and benefit more people.

So what sort of community works well for older people, including those with higher support needs?

These are notes from group discussions at the event about the sort of life we want when we are older – whether that is now or in the future – and the sort of community we want to live in.

### What does a good life mean for you?

- Being valued, and having nice things in our lives that make us feel valued
- Independence, choice, sense of belonging, security
- Learning, growth
- Feeling safe
- Knowing your neighbours
- Good physical, social and emotional health, and a balance of all 3
- Have people around me
- Keeping up my interests
- Access to good support services when we need them
- Control of your own life
- Getting out of the house
- Interacting with family, friends, work colleagues – people in our lives who matter to us
- Keeping active
- People who share our interests and hobbies
- Being part of communities and activities that value everyone's contribution equally

## How support services work

- A real understanding of issues by commissioners e.g. not having services that are only 15 minute visits
- Commissioners and staff in services learning by listening to older people, training delivered by those living in the community, with real stories by real people
- Seamless services that work across Health, Council and care providers
- Services that link up and work well for all of our needs, not putting people into boxes or only dealing with one aspect of our life or wellbeing
- Much more focus on prevention

## How we feel about ordinary services

- For most people this is a very significant source of support and we value them.
- Some people felt that ordinary services do not work well for older people and could get better.

## Knowing what is there

- Too many people don't know what is there, so can't use good supports in their community
- Services need to advertise more: people need information in GP surgeries, community services, TV, buses, bus stops, churches, shops and more

## Attitudes and values

- Positive attitudes help
- Patronising and limiting attitudes get in the way
- Not assuming that everyone is a threat to older people, but still recognising that people may need help in staying safe
- People in different generations coming together in ways that increase understanding and do not create or reinforce stereotypes
- The attitudes of other people towards people with dementia could be a lot more positive: we need something similar to the See Me campaign that tackled awareness and understanding on mental health
- We also need more understanding about ways to include people with hearing or sight loss.

## Physical environment, local services and where we live

- Housing that works well as we get older - how it is designed, or the small adaptions that mean we can stay independent and safe
- Benches and loos that the public can use in town centres and shopping centres

- Even surfaces and ramps
- Libraries that are open and have a good range of material including audio books
- Good accessible local transport
- Being able to stay in the place where we grew up as we need more support

## How decisions are made

- Older people's voices being valued and heard
- Public services making the effort to come to older people
- Learning from other places and other cultures
- Decisions made at the grassroots by the people who are most affected by that service or change, and who live with the outcomes

"Having a positive attitude ourselves and not seeing getting older in negative ways."

"We found that asking one person to describe what has happening in her life was a good way to get started."

"When you do know what is available you have choices and feel reassured."

"Someone you can just talk to and get some advice from. You need to be desperate to phone social work."

"It can be hard to know if ordinary services are safe for older people when they don't have safeguards like a registration system."

"It's asking different questions, such as 'How do we make support from neighbours safe?'"

"Encouragement to keep active, including for people with dementia – walking groups of different levels, walking football, sports for people with dementia, playing with our grandchildren and great grandchildren."

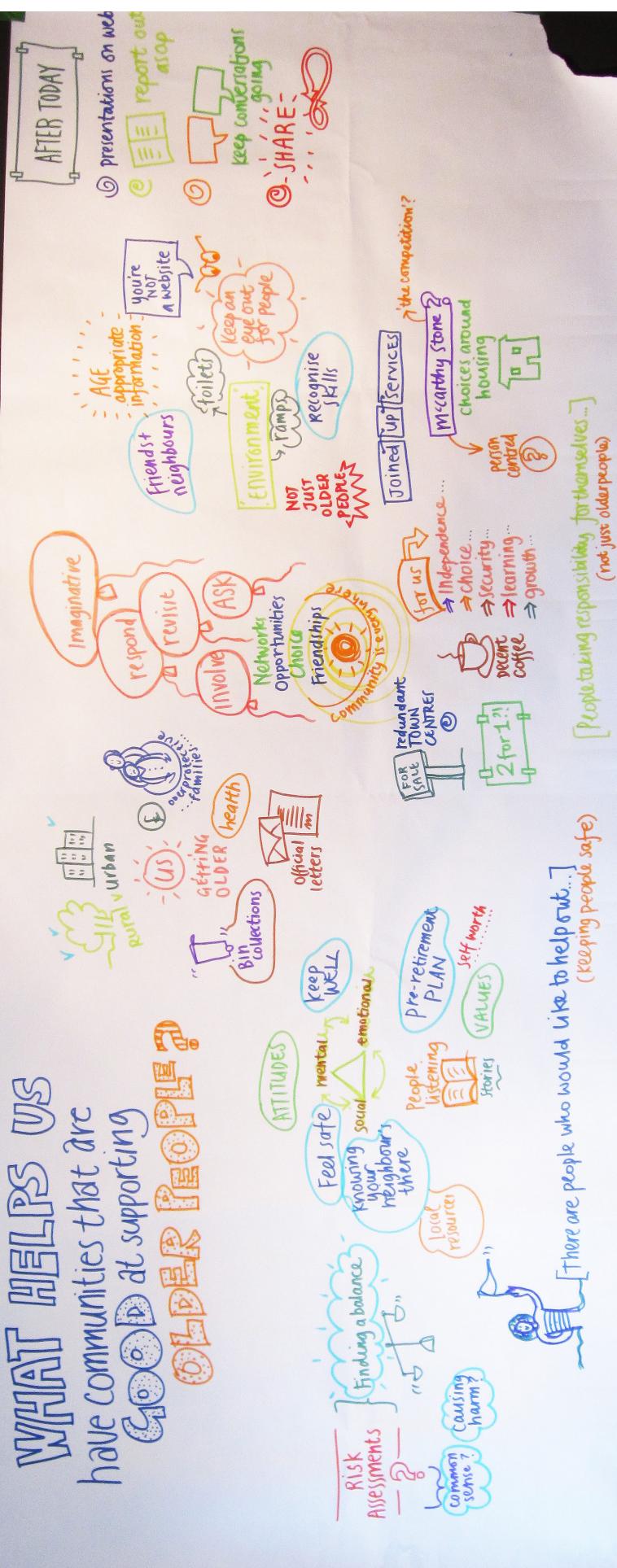
"Work with businesses in the community that are being helpful, such as Tesco helping with information about local community resources in Scottish Borders."

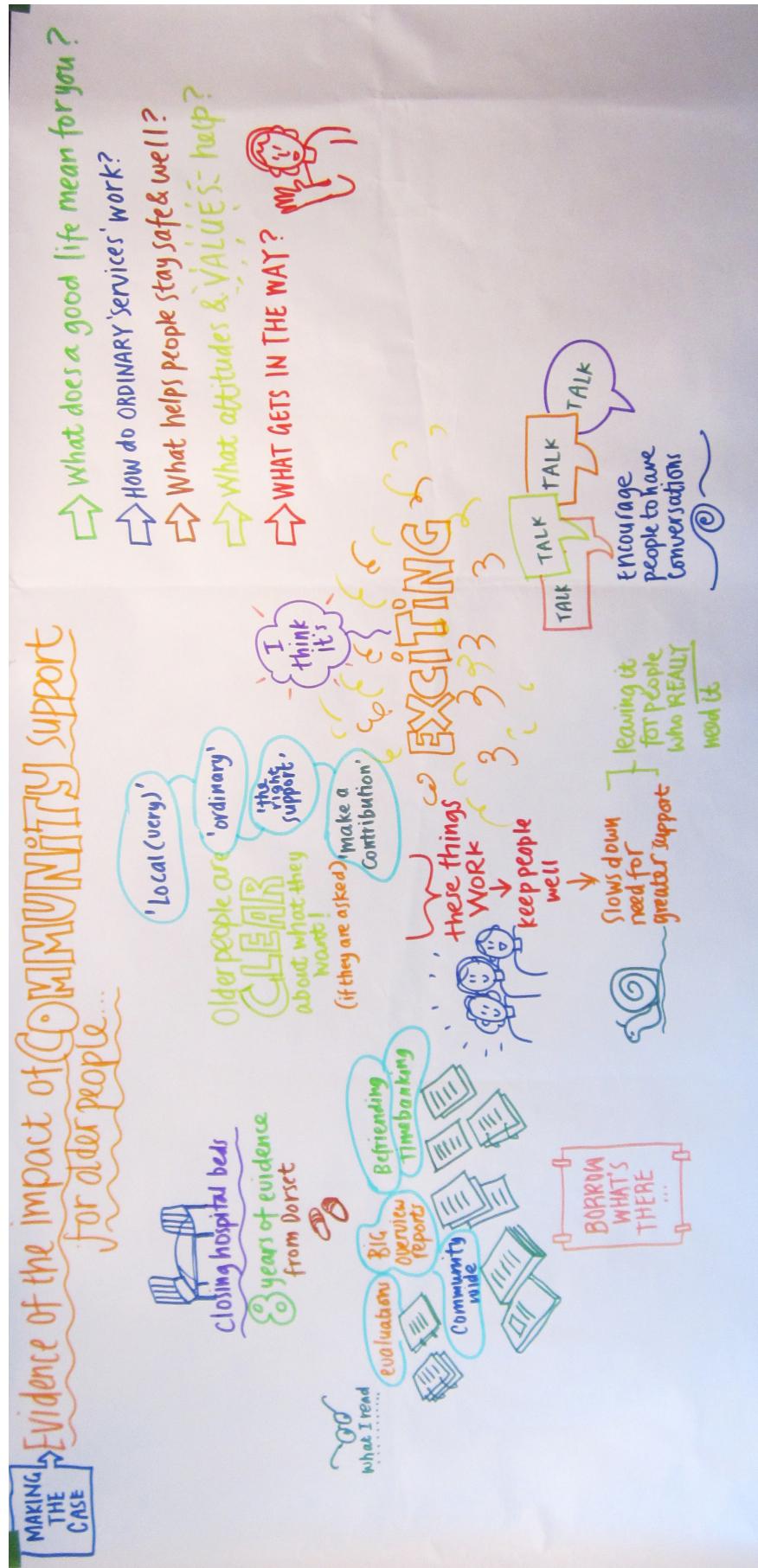
There are fuller notes from the discussions at these events and from other conversations people are having on the Wisdom in Practice website. There are also some topics and suggestions on how to get your own conversations started.

<http://www.wisdominpractice.org.uk/conversations-about-community-support-for-older-people/>

# WHAT HELPS US

have communities that are  
GOOD at supporting  
**OLDER PEOPLE?**





# What next

Outside the Box will continue to share experiences and ideas from people who are finding more ways for older people, especially those with higher support needs, to be part of their communities.

## What you can do

Tell other people what you are doing and learning about giving older people more choices and opportunities in their lives.

Follow up the ideas and contacts from this event and other places. Ask how they got started and find out how you can adapt their learning to your situation.

Older people, families and friends, volunteers and workers can get together to think about what sort of community you want to see.

## Contact

Outside the Box  
150 Brand St, Glasgow, G51 1DH  
0141 419 0451

[admin@otbds.org](mailto:admin@otbds.org)  
[www.otbds.org](http://www.otbds.org)  
[www.wisdominpractice.org.uk](http://www.wisdominpractice.org.uk)

Follow us on Twitter @OtBcommunities