

Ageing
Better
in Camden



'It was a day of friendliness'

Older people's views on outreach in sheltered housing

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About Ageing Better in Camden

We are a partnership of older people and Camden organisations, working together to tackle social isolation and loneliness among older people. We draw on existing skills and resources in the local community to tackle social isolation and loneliness.

Ageing Better in Camden is part of Age UK Camden and Ageing Better, a programme set up by The National Lottery Community Fund, the largest funder of community activity in the UK. Ageing Better aims to develop creative ways for people aged over 50 to be actively involved in their local communities, helping to combat social isolation and loneliness. It is one of five major programmes set up by The National Lottery Community Fund to test and learn from new approaches to designing services which aim to make people’s lives healthier and happier.



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Introduction and background

This report presents views of older people on the approach to sheltered housing outreach work developed by the Ageing Better in Camden (ABC) Outreach Team since 2018. It is intended to inform those with an interest in addressing social isolation and loneliness of older people who are living in sheltered housing.



The research relates to practice before the start of the Covid 19 lockdown period and the outreach team have since had to adapt their approach. However, in view of the dramatically increased risk of social isolation and loneliness during the pandemic, the views expressed by residents about these social experiences are now more relevant than ever.

Our thanks goes to all of the residents and sheltered housing managers in Camden whose generous contributions made this work possible.

Sheltered Housing in Camden

Sheltered Housing in Camden (excluding extra care schemes) includes 1,648 flats rented either from the council, social landlords or housing associations. These schemes are intended to enable older people to live independently by providing additional safety and well-being support from a sheltered housing manager*. However, the majority of sheltered housing managers do not live on site and are often busy attending to practical health and support needs of residents and to other aspects of their work. This creates challenges around finding the time to provide the activities and support necessary for some residents to develop and maintain social connections.

*According to London Borough of Camden information (LBC, 2015)

ABC outreach work in sheltered housing

The ABC Outreach Team aims to proactively find and engage with socially isolated older people who are not connected to formal services, including individuals who may be reluctant to access activities, help and support. One of the main locations for this work is in London Borough of Camden sheltered housing schemes.

ABC outreach work in sheltered housing consists of a set of activities which, together, are designed to initiate contact with an older person, begin to establish a relationship with them and respond to their needs and interests. The work is intended to provide a stepping stone to fuller social engagement with other residents in the housing scheme and to established groups and activities in the community.

The sheltered housing outreach activities focussed on in this report are:

1. **Doorstep outreach**
2. **Holding an informal 'pop-up' social event: this could be a first visit 'tea and cake' event OR in a small number of sheltered housing schemes a repeat event such as a 'fish and chip supper'.**

The main principles observed by the team for this work are:

- **DO** initiate engagement with the older person in a friendly, informal and light touch way
- **DO** be responsive to the individual's needs and interests
- **DO** provide support and encouragement to engage with the outreach activity (sensitively and as appropriate)
- **DO** offer information about relevant activities and support outside the sheltered housing
- **DO** model good practice in relation to safeguarding of older people and outreach staff
- **DON'T** solely focus on identification of and engagement with 'vulnerable' residents: an individual may not see themselves as such and be alienated by the suggestion
- **DON'T** be intrusive
- **DON'T** try to solve complex problems
- **DON'T** use this as an opportunity to collect personal information from residents

This report

This report is based on interviews carried out with residents at pop-up social events held in six sheltered housing schemes by the ABC Outreach Team in Camden between April 2019 and February 2020.

Findings are based on brief interviews carried out with residents at pop-up social events run in six different sheltered housing schemes by the ABC Outreach Team (see Appendix for details). They took place between April 2019 and February 2020. Sixty different people attended these events with between 5 and 20 people at each one. We talked to 37 of them.

Our findings are presented in four sections:

- Summary and key findings
- Residents' views: a need for social contact
- Residents' views on ABC Doorstep outreach
- Residents' views on ABC Pop-up social events

Summary and key findings

Interviews indicated that combined efforts of outreach workers and sheltered housing managers encouraged residents to attend a subsequent social event. This included a number who lacked social opportunities and were feeling lonely or isolated.

The outreach event was mainly valued as an opportunity for social contact. A smaller number appreciated information received about activities they could attend in the community. However, the interviews indicated that for some there was also a wish for more on-site social activities and, indeed, not all residents can access community groups. A significant level of ongoing support may be needed to facilitate such social engagement on-site.

- **Providing information and reassurance:** Joint provision of information about outreach social activity by sheltered housing managers and external outreach workers encouraged residents to engage in events by providing reassurance that the activity is trustworthy and making certain that messages get through.
- **Initial doorstep engagement:** Friendly, responsive doorstep conversations with outreach workers from outside the scheme could be a powerful form of initial engagement for older people which can '*nudge*' them to attend a subsequent social event. This includes those who face social-emotional barriers to doing so.
- **Varied individual and sheltered housing social contexts:** The pop-up social events organised by the Outreach Team were important for some residents since there were little or no existing social activities on site. In some schemes, there were already regular social events. However, these did not always match the interests or social needs of individuals. The pop-ups seemed less important for those who already attended many activities outside the sheltered housing scheme.
- **Immediate social impact of outreach events:** Pop-up social events were appreciated by most interviewees as opportunities to socialise with neighbours and outreach workers. The experience responded to their wishes and needs for social contact. In some cases, attendance was a step to addressing significant social isolation and loneliness. And for some, socialising at the event had a tangible effect on their sense of well-being.
- **Future engagement in community groups and activities?** A smaller number of residents appreciated the outreach events because of information they had received about activities, groups or services they could attend in the community.
- **Future social engagement within sheltered housing? The need for support:** Some residents expressed a firm intention to maintain social connections made at the pop-up event. A number expressed an interest in having more regular social events inside their sheltered housing schemes. This was likely to be particularly important for those who could not access activities in the community because, even with help, they faced physical or emotional barriers to attending. However, there was substantial variation in support provided by housing managers to run regular groups and activities on-site and in their capacity to do so.

Residents' views: a need for social contact



A need for social contact

Thirty of the 37 interviewees gave reasons for coming to the outreach pop-up event. Of these, 26 mentioned social motivations. One woman described herself and her friend as *'very chatty'* and said they had come to the first pop-up event

'For a chat and to throw our opinions about.'

Comments around socialising were made both by individuals who regarded themselves as outgoing and those who did not:

'I like doing things with other people, in a communal group'

'It's important to get out, to talk. I'm a very social person.'

'It's nice to be with others. I'm not a very social person but I'm happy to see others for a bit.'

Some expressed a more urgent need for social contact, indicating that their attendance at the event was a means of addressing their social isolation or loneliness. One individual talked about wanting company. Another explained that they had been feeling isolated and lonely for a long period of time and needed to talk to someone. A third explained that she cannot go out of the sheltered housing scheme much because of health issues so

'I stay in and it's not good to not see people...I want company not TV.'

Another expressed a sense of hopelessness,

'I wish it would happen more often because it's so quiet and I get miserable and bored. Even if you see family you still spend more time alone. I'm a very social person. But there's no answer, no solution.'

There was variation in whether individuals had come along to socialise with others they already knew or to develop new relationships with peers. One resident talked about coming to see everybody who they socialise with anyway:

'It's nice to see everybody...more or less the usual suspects who come on a Friday.'

Another who was a residents' representative explained that he got satisfaction, as someone who was known to many residents, from encouraging and supporting them to attend. One new resident explained that she had come because she wanted to meet the neighbours. Another, more established, said that they had come to make fuller social contact with neighbours:

'I know they exist but usually we just wave. But today we're here in the same place.'

Existing opportunities for social contact

The importance placed on opportunity to be *'in the same place'* as other residents at the outreach pop-ups seemed very important to some interviewees. When asked about the pop-up event, six interviewees voiced their experience in terms of a contrast to the usual lack of social activity in their scheme:

'Brilliant, just brilliant. This would be a death place.... There wouldn't be a cricket in here today if they [the Outreach Team] weren't here.'

'I've come for the company, tea and cakes - nothing usually happens here.'

'First time I've been in the room with people in it - normally no one's here.'



For those that did want to meet with their neighbours, some sheltered housing schemes already had social opportunities and the pop-up was an addition to established regular events. For example, in three of the schemes there was a weekly coffee get-together. However, even when events of interest took place within the scheme they did not necessarily match the interests or satisfy the social needs of some individuals. One woman said that she had come to the pop-up to get information about

'Something that deserves more than two brain cells; lots of people prefer half a day of bingo. ...This place is as dead as a doornail. I'd like to sit down and discuss books. Not aches and pains.'

By contrast some individuals already had a busy life outside the scheme. One man provided a long list of community activities in which he was currently or previously. Another explained that he was only able to come to the pop-up because his daytime class had been cancelled. His main reason for coming to the pop-up was to get some specific information about IT support which might be available in the community.

Residents' views on Doorstep Outreach: addressing barriers and facilitating first social engagement

Doorstep Outreach is a method of making contact with as many residents as possible in a sheltered housing scheme. It is labour intensive but considered essential by the Outreach Team for providing a first step to further engagement at their subsequent pop-up social event at the scheme. A detailed description of Doorstep Outreach can be found in our ['Doorstep Outreach' practitioner's guide](#). In brief, it involves:

- Delivering a letter to each home several days before calling at the door. This introduces the outreach team by name and specifies that they are from Age UK Camden; explains when and why they will be calling back; and gives a number which the resident can call to leave a message if they do not want to be disturbed.
- Including an invitation to a pop-up social event to be held in a communal area of the housing scheme within the next few days.
- Taking care to make this invitation informal, friendly and inclusive. Particular effort is made to ensure that it is not gender-biased, for example, by avoiding the term 'coffee morning' which may be off-putting to men.
- Knocking at each door to make brief face-to-face contact, to reiterate the invitation and, in some cases, spending longer in conversation if the individual seems to need this.

Since we only talked to people who did attend events, we do not know why others did not come. As one housing manager indicated, some residents are already busy with family, friends and activities outside the sheltered housing scheme. On the other hand, some of the barriers referred to next may have prevented attendance by others who were socially isolated or lonely.

Thirty-four residents explained how they knew about the social event. They mentioned one or more sources of information: the doorstep outreach letter, doorstep conversation, information received from their housing manager or, in

a few instances, from a friend or fellow resident. Their responses raise some important issues for considering how best to initiate engagement with socially isolated older people.

Wariness or fear of deception: the importance of multiple sources of information about outreach activity

Joint publicising of the outreach activity by sheltered housing managers and the Outreach Team seems likely to be important for maximising reassurance that the approach from outreach workers – and the social event itself - is safe and legitimate.

For 11 people, housing managers were mentioned as providing information about the pop-up event in addition to that received from the Outreach Team; for nine people they were the only source of information. In several cases, where older people did not mention receiving information from the manager, they expressed initial wariness or scepticism about approaches from the Outreach Team. One mentioned his general fear of answering the door in case someone wanted to cause trouble or steal from him and said that, when the outreach workers knocked, he had called through the door to check who they were. Another said that she had received the outreach team letter but even so did not answer the door to them because,

'I don't open the door except if I know who's coming.'

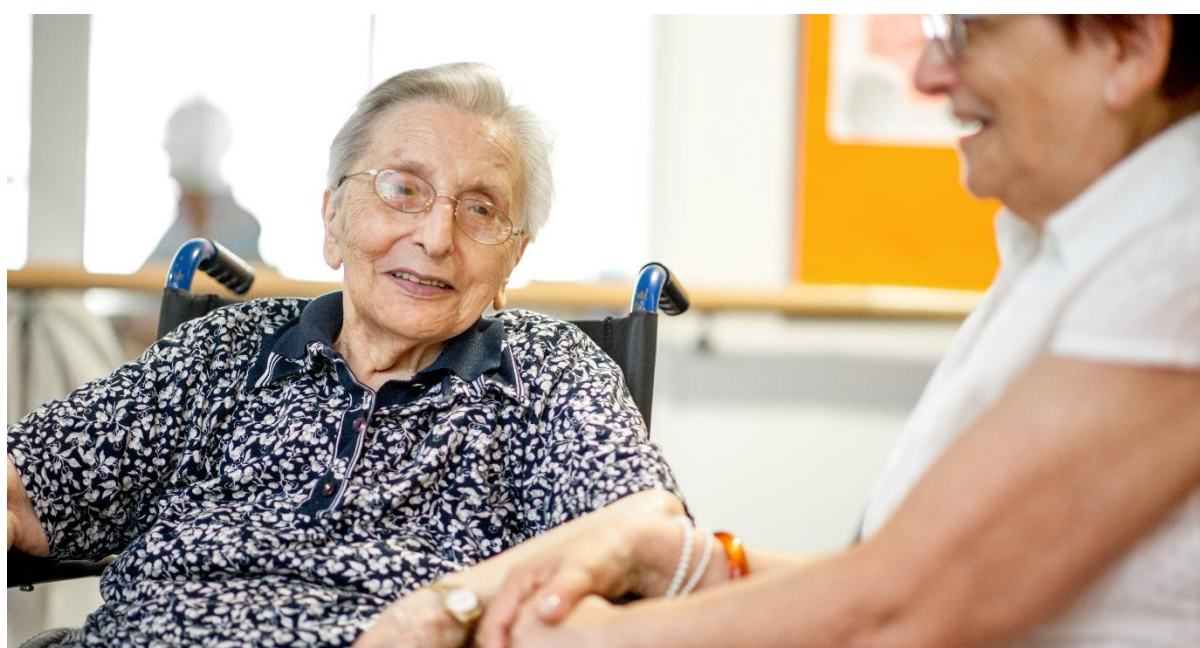
Another initially threw away the letter as junk mail. This indicates that information which comes through the letter box from an unknown source may be seen as just one more piece of paper containing irrelevant or untrustworthy information. Indeed, she and her friend later called their housing manager to check that the outreach work was genuine. This left only 12 residents (just over a third) who said that they attended the event solely on the basis of information received from the Outreach Team.

On the other hand, 25 interviewees mentioned Outreach Team information with or without additional housing manager contact (over two thirds). We asked whether it was important that it was Age UK Camden making the visits and organising the social event. Five older people mentioned that the known and trusted Age UK brand was important for providing reassurance that information, doorstep calls and social event were legitimate:

'People know about Age UK There are too many scams in the world.'

Another mentioned that, in fact, because Age UK organisations are long established, they commanded more trust and confidence than the housing scheme management company which had changed a number of times during the period he had lived there. However, five other interviewees did not think it mattered who was running the event.

Ensuring the message gets through



Another consideration is that providing multiple sources of information ensures that the message about the outreach activity does get through. Different interviewees who were attending the same event mentioned different forms of communication as their source of information about the pop-up. This may mean that they had not all received or attended to all forms of information. For example, a housing manager or the Outreach Team may have called to talk about the outreach event when the resident was out. Written information may have been ignored, as with the resident who discarded the Outreach Team letter as junk mail.

At the same time, different kinds of information appeared to be effective in engaging the attention and interest of different individuals and encouraging

them to attend. Two older people mentioned that one form of information or another could act as a reminder. For one man, this was an on-the-day phone call from his housing manager: he had forgotten about the event despite already receiving information from the manager, a letter and doorstep conversation with the Outreach Team. Another said that,

'Paper through the door is a good thing because some people in the building need reminders.'

Doorstep conversation as social engagement: nudging, supporting and meeting people in crisis

Eighteen residents mentioned having a doorstep conversation with the Outreach Team. Remarks of several interviewees suggest that, for those residents who answer their door, this conversation may act as a particularly powerful form of engagement which motivates them to attend the pop-up event itself. One woman indicated that meeting the outreach workers in person at their door provided a valuable, perhaps rare, social encounter in itself:

'It's very uplifting to have three visitors when you don't even know what a visitor is any more ... I'm not forgotten, not old and forgotten.'

This kind of experience seems likely to be particularly encouraging for those who are out of the habit or fearful of socialising.

A doorstep chat could also show the older person that the team were interested in tailoring information and support to meet their own interests and needs. One interviewee mentioned how pleased she was because, after talking to the outreach workers about her interest in galleries and museums, they had provided her with her own personalised list of relevant events and activities when they returned for the social event.

These meaningful personal encounters may constitute the *'slight nudge'* that one resident said was needed to make the decision to go to an event. For some this nudge is a lifeline: one individual spoke about being encouraged by the doorstep conversation to attend the social event and at that second meeting discussed distressing problems with an outreach worker that they had kept to themselves for years.

Barriers and facilitators to attending: social context and physical constraints

Comments from those attending pop-up events indicated that there was some new social engagement by people who did not join in with existing events in the scheme. In one example, some of the residents organised informal get-togethers such as music nights where they listened to their favourite songs. At the first pop-up in this scheme, two of the 'regulars' said that the turnout was surprisingly better than expected (eight - four men, four women – rather than the usual two or three). In another scheme, there had been a regular coffee morning. However, even though open to all in theory, it had only been attended by a group of four friends and had eventually petered out. At their first pop-up, one man noted two others attending and said that *'a few more have come today.'*

The reticence of those who do not usually attend sheltered housing events met with a dismissive attitude from some 'regulars'. One interviewee at a first pop-up event regarded those who did not usually come to events as *'unsociable'*. Another said that:

'People don't come for whatever reason...They don't care or they die.'

It seems possible that such attitudes might play a part in deterring attendance. However, others were more empathic and interviewees at three different pop-ups recognised that factors such as social fear, lack of English or physical limitations and health can be barriers to joining in. An example is from the same man who expressed his pleasure at being able to be *'in the same place'* as fellow residents. He said that he didn't see them much because he wasn't able to move around the scheme, had to attend lots of hospital appointments and also that he had only been able to come along on that day because a carer visit had been cancelled.

Two people indicated that fellow residents had a role to play in encouraging their neighbours to socialise. One of them talked about needing to *'go gently'* and that he as a known resident representative had played a role in encouraging attendance of more reticent neighbours.

Given the potential importance of such encouragement, new engagement at the pop-up events may also be the result of a fresh, supportive, inclusive approach by the Outreach Team.

Residents' views: experiences of sheltered housing 'pop-up' events and future possibilities

What is an ABC pop-up social event?

Soon after the initial contact is made with residents during Doorstep Outreach, the Outreach Team run a pop-up social event in a communal area of the sheltered housing scheme. At a first pop-up event, the team aim to create an informal and welcoming atmosphere and to avoid any feeling that this is an institutional event. Tea and cake are offered and the outreach workers are on hand to chat. There are no talks or presentations and no attempt is made to collect any personal information from those who attend.

Leaflets and information sheets about a variety of activities and groups which take place in the local area are laid out. If a resident expresses interest in a particular kind of activity, the outreach worker will give them the relevant printed information to take away and use it as a focus for further conversation. In response to need, the Outreach Team also offer information about services which can provide specialist intensive support (e.g. counselling and social prescribing services).

In a small number of sheltered housing schemes, the Outreach Team have helped to organise additional second or third social events including a 'tea club' and several fish and chip suppers. The intention is that over time residents themselves may, with support, be able to continue these activities as regular social events. One event attended for this research was a one-off where a company which produces 'home-cooked' ready meals provided a sample lunch for residents.

Immediate impact of the pop-up social event

Social connection and a sense of well-being

All 37 interviewees gave their views on the pop-up event that they were attending. Comments about the event were almost wholly positive. For the majority (27), its immediate value or impact lay in the social contact afforded. Some simply mentioned this contact as positive:

'It's nice to get together.'

'Very good. Great meeting people - that's key because you don't know who you'll meet...Friendliness and camaraderie as they call it.'

'Wonderful because it's been a great event to bring together most of us from the sheltered.'



'Very good to socialise' Others specifically mentioned that the pop-up provided a chance to meet people in their sheltered housing scheme, so offering the potential to revive or expand social connections close to home. And for the resident who had only recently moved in, this had given her an important first opportunity to establish contact with neighbours.

'I told my daughter that I wasn't going to be lonely here.... This is lovely. It's very nice.... Good to meet my neighbours.'

'It's good to say 'Hello' to a few people, see a few faces. Because people change over the years. Some disappear, new ones come.'

Several also expressed pleasure at meeting the Outreach Team. One woman had enjoyed talking to one of the workers about a variety of things that interested her: *'spiritual things, veganism, animal rights.'* Another said,

'It was a day of friendliness. AM and J are very friendly. I like meeting new people'

For some, the pleasure around pop-ups events was tied up with the food provided:

'It's been lovely: the meal and the people, and the atmosphere.'

'Good stuff – I liked everything. The company, tea and cakes and I'm interested in the exercise classes.'

A number of residents also described the event as a change from the norm, which offered them the chance to *'get out'* as well as to meet neighbours. Several talked about this social experience as having a striking and tangible effect on their sense of well-being or acting as an antidote to loneliness or being cooped up at home.

'I know it's only a small thing, but it's wonderful because it's broke the monotony - we wouldn't be here if not for you.'

'I feel better, more like a human. You feel like you're in a little box on your own: I hate it. When I moved here, I thought I would mix with people but you don't.'

'Lovely, a nice surprise. It makes you feel less lonely with something going on...It feels like you've done something with your life.'

One man referred to the social energy generated by the event in the group as a whole:

'Class, couldn't have it better...Everybody's been talking to each other, saying what's been going on.'

Receiving information about community activities: opening up new possibilities outside the sheltered housing scheme?

When asked about the event, a smaller number of interviewees (ten) mentioned that they had been provided with information about activities that they could attend outside the scheme.

Seven of this group talked about receiving information as well as about social aspects of the pop-up. Three only mentioned receiving information. For the latter group, information provided met very specific needs or interests. One

individual was looking for cultural activities to attend and received information about lunchtime concerts; another had a particular problem with his iPad and received information about Age UK Camden IT support; another had been provided with information about some very local activities to which he could take his wife who had recently become wheelchair bound.

Other residents who mentioned receiving information, had not come to the event to find out anything specific but had nevertheless found activities of interest in the Outreach Team flyers. For example, one woman had found details of a fitness class she would like to attend. Two others were interested in various things: free tea and social sessions run by the ABC Outreach Team in one of Camden's libraries, 'bench to bench' walks organised by a local community group, and bingo sessions run by an older person's charity. Another resident had given permission, after conversation with outreach workers, to refer them for counselling. This suggested that outreach work of this kind could open up the possibility of new social activities and support for older people who might not have previously considered them.

Pop-ups as a tentative stepping-stone to future social engagement?

Indications of pop-up experiences as an impetus for future social engagement

Residents' comments suggested that the pop-up event generated or tapped into wishes for social activity beyond the one-off outreach event. Eleven of the interviewees explicitly stated that they would like to have similar events taking place in their sheltered housing scheme again. Some of them suggested having social get-togethers every week, perhaps because they had little going on already; others wanted them less frequently, perhaps because they were already quite busy outside the scheme.

'This is what should happen at least once a week, but this is empty seven days a week.'

'I wouldn't call in very often - I go out three times a week, to see friends, so wouldn't come much but it would be something to do, something.'



This woman wanted different kinds of events on offer and mentioned the possibility of getting together to play music. Another wanted an event with healthy food. Others did not have strong opinions about the form of any future events (*'Whatever you want'*) and so perhaps an informal social get-together would be enough.

While the emphasis in these comments was on having more social activity on site, one small group discussed the need for ongoing provision of information about activities inside and outside the scheme. They said that discussing the information about groups and activities provided by the outreach workers made them realise that they needed a big noticeboard in their sheltered housing to advertise opportunities to all the residents. They decided to ask their housing manager for one.

There was also some indication that social engagement and connections made at these events would indeed continue or that individuals would seek out opportunities outside the scheme. For example, two mentioned that they had come to a second outreach event because they had enjoyed the first. The resident who had newly moved to the scheme said that she had already arranged to meet up with someone she had met at the pop-up. The group who had discussed a scheme noticeboard, said that they would be attending a free lunch event that they had heard about from the Outreach Team. The man who had been told about IT support sessions at Age UK Camden said that he was going to one the next day.

Some of these cases, also suggest that individuals who had attended events might themselves, in turn, impact on the social engagement of other residents and so magnify the effects of the outreach activity. Installing of an information noticeboard is one example; another is the man who was going to solve his IT problems since he sometimes used his iPad to stage musical get-togethers where he could play requests from those attending. Four interviewees mentioned that those who attended could pass on their positive experiences of the outreach event to those who had not come, so giving them time to become familiar with the idea and encouraging them to come next time:

'Success breeds success!'

Barriers to further social engagement within sheltered housing schemes: difficulty of self-organising activities and a need for support

As already discussed, our interviews with sheltered housing residents demonstrated their need for social contact and the fact that they often wanted - and perhaps needed - more social activity to take place within their housing scheme. Reasons included that they wanted opportunities to connect with their neighbours and that it was difficult for them to engage in social activities in the community (see also next section re transport barriers.) This need for onsite social life is implicit in the London Borough of Camden description of benefits of sheltered housing that residents will be *'living alongside people of a similar age to you'* and *'enables you to take part in a range of social activities'* (London Borough of Camden, 2015).

Remarks by several interviewees showed that establishing and maintaining such social activity is not easy and is likely to require support. They talked about the transient nature of previous resident-led, on-site groups. One said that she used to run craft classes in her housing scheme but had stopped doing so because of someone with a difficult personality. She said that she now runs a games afternoon twice a week but that only two or three people come. In another scheme, as already mentioned, two women said a weekly coffee morning had petered out. With reference to the outreach pop-up, they said it was *'nicer having someone who comes from outside'* indicating that it can be useful to have support for running events and that this might best be provided by someone external to their scheme.

In a few housing schemes, the ABC Outreach Team has run repeat social events and supported residents to run their own. However, their capacity to provide

ongoing, on-site input is limited. The housing manager is an obvious potential source of more continuous support for social activity. However, there appeared to be wide variation in the extent to which this was forthcoming. Two women from one scheme praised their manager for working hard to arrange regular activities and for encouraging residents to attend. At the other end of the spectrum, residents from two schemes referred to substantially reduced input into social events since previous housing managers had left. One indicated that organised activities such as film nights and fish and chip suppers, which had now ceased, had made a big difference:

'It made you feel different about living here: homely.'

Comments also showed recognition that it was hard work for managers to engage people socially and one man tied the disappearance of social activities in his scheme to the fact they now had temporary managers who did not live on-site. Managers may not have capacity to prioritise this area of their job.

Transport as a barrier to further engagement outside sheltered housing schemes

Even when provided with information about activities of interest outside the scheme, two interviewees expressed doubt about whether they would be able to attend. Both mentioned challenges related to travelling: *'It's all about transport.'* One of them mentioned the difficulties of getting to and participating in some activities because his wife was in a wheelchair. Another said that even though she had help with taxis and their cost from Age UK Camden, she didn't think she could negotiate the journey from door to door to get to the lunchtime concerts which she would love to attend.

Comments from a third showed how things could go wrong: she had twice taken a taxi to an outing with a support group she belonged to but had failed to meet up with the group and ended up alone.

Therefore, encouraging socially isolated older people to join groups or activities in the community is not only a matter of providing them with relevant information. For some, physical difficulty and lack of confidence, alone or in combination, may deter them. This underlines the importance of the provision of regular, engaging social events inside sheltered housing schemes.

Conclusion

Interviews with these sheltered housing residents demonstrated their desire and need for social opportunities and engaging activities. Considerable efforts made by the Outreach Team and/or housing managers helped to encourage attendance at an outreach event by providing information and reassurance. For some these events offered possibilities for further social engagement inside or outside the housing scheme. Others were likely to need substantial continued on-site support to establish and sustain satisfying social connections.

References

London Borough of Camden (2015) *Sheltered housing schemes in Camden*. [Accessed 2 July 2020]. Available at <https://www.camden.gov.uk/documents/20142/2782436/Info+about+different+schemes+in+Camden.pdf/116b875a-a59c-2ba2-d470-797f9f2b2547>

Appendix

This report: What did we do? This report is based on interviews carried out with residents at pop-up social events run in their sheltered housing scheme by the ABC Outreach Team. We interviewed a total of 37 older people – 24 women and 13 men - at seven events in six different sheltered housing schemes in Camden between April 2019 and February 2020. Four of these were first pop-ups in the scheme, three were repeat visit events. A total of 60 different people attended the events with between five and 20 people at each one.

Our researcher assisted the Outreach Team with the event and towards the end explained that we were doing a piece of work to find out what residents think about this work in order to write about how to run similar activities in the best way to meet older peoples' needs. The researcher asked those attending the event if they would be willing to answer a few questions taking care to say that it was fine if they did not want to take part. We judged this informal

approach to obtaining consent to be appropriate given the need to maintain the informality of the event itself and the brief, non-intrusive nature of the questions.

These 'light-touch' interviews were semi-structured and took five to ten minutes. We asked residents about

- The approach taken to informing them about the social event
- Why they came
- Their views on how it was organised
- Whether they got anything out of the event
- What they would like from any further events

We recognise that views presented here may be more positive about the outreach work because they were expressed to a member of the ABC team and are only from those who did attend the events rather than those who did not. On the other hand, this group of residents from a number of different schemes made some heartfelt in-the-moment comments about their need for social contact and interesting activity and we believe their views should be given weight.

All of the images in this report are from stock image libraries, in order to protect the anonymity of respondents.

