

# Housing Learning & Improvement Network

Care Services Improvement Partnership 

Health and Social Care  
**Change Agent Team**

## “The Generation Project”: A sure start for older people in Manchester

Prepared by **Manchester Care & Repair**, for the Housing Learning & Improvement Network

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### **Key Partners:**

Manchester Housing, North Manchester PCT, Manchester Alliance for Community Care (MACC), New Deal for Communities (NDC).

### **Brief description:**

This case study draws on the work of Manchester Care & Repair and makes the link with work on social inclusion and involving older people in the regeneration of areas of Manchester.

Other Housing LIN publications available in this format:

- Case Study no.1: **Extra Care Strategic Developments in North Yorkshire**
- Case Study no.2: **Extra Care Strategic Developments in East Sussex**
- Case Study no.3: **'Least-use' Assistive Technology in Dementia Extra Care (Eastleigh)**
- Case Study no.5: **Village People: A Mixed Tenure Retirement Community (Bristol)**
- Case Study no.6: **How to get an Extra Care Programme in Practice**
- Case Study no.7: **Supporting Diversity in Tower Hamlets**
- Case Study no.8: **The Kent Health & Affordable Warmth Strategy**
- Case Study no.9: **Supporting People with Dementia in Sheltered Housing**
- Case Study no.10: **Direct Payments for Personal Assistance in Hampshire**
- Case Study no.11: **Housing for Older People from the Chinese Community in Middlesbrough**
- Case Study no.12: **Shared ownership for People with Disabilities (London & SE)**
- Case Study no.13: **Home Care Service for People with Dementia in Poole**
- Case Study no.14: **Intermediate Care Services within Extra Care Sheltered Housing in Maidenhead**
- Case Study no.15: **Sheltered Housing Contributes to Regeneration in Gainsborough**
- Case Study no.16: **Charging for Extra Care Sheltered Housing Services in Salford**
- Case Study no.17: **A Virtual Care Village Model (Cumbria)**
- Case Study no.18: **Community Involvement in Planning Extra Care: the Larchwood User's Group (Brighton & Hove)**
- Case Study no.19 **Durham Integrated Team - a practical guide**
- Case Study no.20 **BME Older People's Joint Service Initiative - Analysis and Evaluation of Current Strategies (Sheffield)**
- Case Study no.21 **Estimating Future Requirements for Extra Care Housing (Swindon)**

The Housing LIN welcomes contributions on a range of issues pertinent to Extra Care housing. If there is a subject that you feel should be addressed, please contact us.

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## **“The Generation Project”: A sure start for older people in Manchester**

**Funded** 2002 to 31.3.2007 by Beacons (NDC/SRB), Supporting People & Housing Market Renewal

**Managed** Manchester Care and Repair Ltd.

### **What it does**

An information and advocacy service. It is free, confidential, impartial and open to anyone aged 55 and over, and/or their carers, who live in Bradford, Beswick, Clayton and Openshaw.

Advocacy involves helping people speak up for themselves, communicate their needs and wishes, make informed choice, secure their rights and obtain services.

We can visit people at home, and can signpost or refer people to other services, as required. The focus is around issues concerning the housing regeneration but also general health and well being.

We help people to sort out any difficulties that they may have, decide what they want and help keep their independence. They may need a hand getting information, making an application, putting over their point of view, or getting some help from another service.

Regarding the Housing Regeneration, we help people consider their housing options and assist them getting the information they need, for example, about rehousing, Compulsory Purchase Order process (CPO), etc. Also, what action they need to take and how to exercise their rights.

Another important aspect of the work is to feed back older people's needs, wishes and aspirations, to other agencies, for example, health, housing, social services, in order to influence service developments.

The Generation Project also supports older people to become involved in running this project, and to get their voice heard through involvement in wider discussion and decision-making forums.

### **Links**

The project has links with numerous statutory, voluntary and community sector organisations, and residential groups, in East Manchester and the surrounding areas. For example, Manchester Housing, North Manchester PCT, Manchester Alliance for Community Care (MACC), Manchester Mental Health Joint Commissioning Executive.

The project attends various meetings, for example, Beacons Health and Well Being, Older People's Health and Well Being, Beacons Mental Health, Manchester Advice and Information Network (MAIN), Advocacy Steering Group & Manchester Older Peoples Network meetings

The Project's Management Group is made up of people from: North PCT, New Deal for Communities (NDC), Manchester Housing, Manchester Social Services, Care and Repair, Age Concern and MACC.

The Project's Reference Group was made up of local residents.

### **Long term**

We are seeking to widen the participation in the East Manchester Over Fifties Forum through a series of presentations and open meetings. The Forum is presently drafting a programme of events and issues to highlight the need to prioritise older people within regeneration and long-term developments of and for communities. Examples of some of the work local older people are seeking to develop is demonstrated in the open meeting held on April 19<sup>th</sup> 2005 "What's in the Box" which was attended by various political representatives to inform local older people of their manifestoes and how they will if elected include and progress issues affecting older people.

The project is also seeking to support the development of local services for older people, which have been highlighted as gaps by both local older people and their carers. For example, low level support/befriending scheme. The Project has attempted to address this a minor way imaginative use of funding secure through The Department Work and Pensions, allocated to address the poor the poor benefits take up (see "Take up Champions" below)

### **Take Up Champions** *(to start end of March 2006)*

The project will work with local residents, carers and older people themselves as delegates of the programme, to highlight the value of the information received as a mechanism through which the delegates can help to increase knowledge of financial and benefits advice available to them as individuals and to members of their community (focusing on older people).

It is envisaged that this process will lead to an increased number of people apply for and receiving benefits, that may impact on and contribute positively to the quality of life for older people in their area.

The programme aims to increase the knowledge base of local residents and individuals in order to support local older residents and the wider community to access and engage in services that may benefit them.

The programme also aims to provide a foundation from which a volunteers base maybe developed, with the commitment of local people, whereby and if

appropriate the increased awareness of issues affecting older people, and services available to them, maybe maximised and progressed in the long term to the development of a low level support/befriending service, targeting those who are isolated or need support to engage with existing provision, with a view to benefiting physical and mental health but also quality of life defined holistically, for example:

- Providing information on which services to access for advice or support on:
  - Benefits
  - Health & Social Care
  - Social activities
  - Housing
- Frequent, regular and reliable contact with isolated older individuals building a personal relationship and trust
- Helping older people to meet their own needs and identify the impact of the local regeneration
- Helping older people access statutory and voluntary sector care, health agencies as well as home improvement agencies, day and resource centres, advice
- Preventing hospital admission by timely referrals to support agencies
- Supporting transition from hospital to home whether or not via intermediate care provision currently being increased

Older people will access the service

- because they will be able to find out about it at whichever point they come into contact with the local network of services that support older people that has been developed with assistance from the Beacons regeneration programme.
- by referral from a range of statutory and voluntary sector agencies that come into contact with older people, including MCC Children, Families and Social Care Service's Older People's Team, health professionals, community groups and even (as the case study below illustrates) bingo clubs.

## **Learning**

The Project has been asked to feed back the experiences of older people and carers to ensure that resources are allocated effectively and efficiently within East Manchester.

The project also aims to highlight the range of national and local initiatives affecting older people i.e. Better Government for Older People, Better Care Higher Standards, National Service framework for Older People, and

Supporting People, alongside Regeneration activities. The Generation Project is also aware that opportunities exist within Regeneration to assist a culture change in the attitudes towards older people and the services available to them. With this in mind we aim to influence and work in partnership with statutory and voluntary sector agencies to establish systems that provide a consistent approach to older peoples needs and improving their quality of life.

## **Advocacy**

Advocacy is essential in ensuring that older people as individuals and part of communities have a voice and support in getting their needs met. This involves highlighting both the gaps and challenges that act as barriers to providing services, involvement and the need to Value Older People.

## **Engagement**

In an attempt to involve local older people in the project, the various regeneration initiatives and support older people to advocate on their own behalf, we arranged a variety of events and network opportunities, which included:

- Housing options Visits
- Hot Pot Lunch meetings
- Health Road Shows
- East Manchester Over Fifties Forum
- Benefit Your Health Day
- What's in the Box?
- National Pensioners Convention

It was envisaged that the above mechanisms would provide opportunities for older people to highlight and prioritise their own needs to agencies and influence service development in their area, whilst also building the capacity of older people to develop sustainable mechanisms for their peer group.

## **Benefit Your Health Day**

This event's purpose was to hold a day that focussed on the older people in the Beacons area increasing their knowledge and understanding of the range of services available to them that would benefit their, health and financial well-being. A range of agencies, both voluntary and statutory, was on hand throughout the day, providing information and taking referrals. Various holistic therapies were also available to build awareness of the number of alternative therapies available to the community that may benefit their well-being.

## **Housing options Visits**

These visits were set up in order to build awareness of local older people about the various architectural features, support and assistive technology measures that are possible, and are not widely known to older people, who maybe considering moving home in the forthcoming future. As The Generation Project is based within a regeneration area, with many older people residing in clearance areas, the visits were planned to help older people feel better equipped to complete the "housing needs surveys" that form part of the Housing Market Renewal process, while empowering older people to make informed options about their future housing needs.

## **National Pensioners Parliament**

In order to ensure that the involvement of local older people was purposeful and grounded in the community, opportunities were sought to build awareness of potential allies and peer support. The National Pensioner's Convention was recognised as a good opportunity to introduce local older people, to both support networks and ways forward to initiate change, both nationally and locally.

Feedback from attending this event in 2004:

*"It opened my eyes to what is happening for older people"*

*"It was great to see so many older people who were active doing things, making things happen"*

*"I wish I was just a few years younger then I could get more involved, but I'm glad the National Pensioner's are here, at it shows that older people are doing something and can make a difference"*

*"I didn't even know they existed"*

*"It's just great to see so many older people"*

Since the first trip organised from East Manchester by the Generation Project, the Forum - which has since been established - has organised a group of older people to attend the National Pensioner's Convention in 2005 and are in the progress of planning the next group trip in 2006. The Forum also organised a group from East Manchester to lobby Parliament in 2005, as part of the National Pensioners Convention's strategy.

## **Hot Pot Lunch Meeting**

The Hot Pot lunch meetings were the Project's initial way to communicate with older people in East Manchester. The lunches were part of a social activity,

that were themed on particular issues i.e. Health, Neighbour nuisance, Financial Inclusion, and Support in the home.

These meetings give older people the opportunity to build awareness of the various resources available to them and also raise concerns and priorities for themselves – directly to agency staff giving their presentations.

For example: at the meeting on “Neighbour nuisance”, representatives attended from the Youth team and the Neighbour nuisance team, outlining how their services operated, contact details and resources available. During the meeting, older people were given business cards and encouraged to make contact with the officers if they had any concerns, which resulted in the immediate feedback from the older people in the meeting:

*Many stating “ I feel better now I know who to contact, and what is happening in my area”*

As the perception of crime by older people did not reflect the statistics of who were the victims of crime (primarily young people) this event did have an instant outcome in that it help to alleviate some of the perceptions of crime perpetrated against older people and highlight support available in the community.

These meetings have become quiet popular, taking place in local spaces utilised by local older people. Venues were chosen to ensure that older people did not have to travel too far, while again widening the awareness of local venues offering services to older people, i.e. Churches, Sheltered accommodation and resource centres. Transport and refreshments are available to ensure that minimum disruption and maximum access is available. Older people themselves prioritise the topics for the meetings. When issues are raised meetings are organised in response to those issues and services, which dictate the themes.

### **East Manchester Over Fifties Forum**

The forum was set up, with a view to providing a sustainable advocacy mechanism for local older people in East Manchester. To date the Forum has conducted a number of events and activities supported by the Generation Project and 4CT community project. These events include:

- What’s in the Box?
- National Pensioners Parliament
- Lobbying Parliament
- Housing event

The aims of the East Manchester Forum are

1. to work for the benefit of older people's concerns by providing a voice on issues concerning their quality of life, health and well-being, and to realise their potential as a creative and active resource for the community
2. to ensure that the Forum is democratic, non-sectarian, non-racial and non-party political. It plans to make representation to public and other bodies on behalf of the area's over-fifties population
3. to lobby against discrimination based on age and to encourage better understanding between younger and older people.
4. to influence policy and practice at both LOCAL AND NATIONAL levels

The forum now has a constituted group with a membership of 70 older people, which has given them the mandate to work on behalf of their peers in the community.

All attempts by The Generation Project to involve local older people have been built on the premise of sustainability and long-term engagement of local older people. The Project has endeavoured to increase awareness of options available locally in order to ensure that the presence of local older people is valued and their input is purposeful in service development.

### **Challenges**

- To gain genuine commitments from service providers across the voluntary and statutory sector to prioritise the needs of older people.
- To identify systems and approaches which link a range of services and resources that will benefit older people.
- To respond to, and develop, low level services currently identified by older people locally and nationally.
- To continue to develop a range of mechanisms in order to respond to the needs identified by local older people.
- To respond to consultation and feedback proactively demonstrating the value of feedback and participation.
- To identify approaches that will encourage meaningful involvement of local older people.
- To develop clear lines of communication to feedback the project's and other agencies learning.
- To make the commitment of all agencies to include older people in service delivery plans a reality and
- Supporting older people to make their views known

## Lessons learned

- For meaningful involvement to take place, tangible efforts need to be made to change the existing culture / aspirations that older people have come to expect when prioritising service development i.e. inform older people of the potential power of older people if they were to mobilise as a group and actively challenge existing mechanisms locally, regionally and nationally.
- Older people are not a homogenous group, therefore, various opportunities (incorporating different levels and skills) need to exist, whereby older people can contribute to the development of services.
- That all agencies would benefit from committing to include older people in service delivery plans, to do other wise would be to exclude the growing majority of the population, many of whom are part of wider networks (families, social, community and work).
- Frequently, organisations are unresponsive to feed back identified through real experiences of older people, which highlight gaps in service delivery. An unwitting tendency prevails that can be incongruent when practise and guidelines are not uniform i.e. to treat each case as an anomaly amongst what is deemed a reliable service, delivered by concise guidelines and policy.
- The fact there is an ongoing and increasing need for advocacy demonstrates that “Advocacy” needs to be recognised as an opportunity to **improve services** and **improve access** to services and engagement of older people.
- Including older people, who may have complex needs and experiences, is important. However, this takes effort and resources, but in most cases is time consuming. Isolated individuals, with complex needs bring experiences that challenge service development to concentrate on delivering simple accessible services, which ultimately will benefit a wider range of people.
- Older people can mobilise themselves, with support.

For details of the Manchester City Council's Valuing Older People's Strategy and commitment to promoting the needs and aspirations of older people, visit [www.manchester.gov.uk/health/pdf/vop.pdf](http://www.manchester.gov.uk/health/pdf/vop.pdf)