

NDTi Insights give you the most important bits of learning from a piece of work by the National Development Team for Inclusion (NDTi). We aim to make them quick to read; they point to more detailed materials for those who want more information.

Increasing Voice, Choice & Control for Older People with High Support Needs Emerging Lessons

Who should read this?

Anyone who is part of an organisation or group which is responsible for or interested in the planning and delivery of local services/that achieve better outcomes for older people. This includes local authorities, NHS organisations, service providers, community groups, user led groups and older people's forums / groups.

Background

A paper produced as part of the South East Regional Initiative (SERI), a cross government project led by the Office for Disability Issues. This 2 year project involves working with 3 local authority sites to embed options and opportunities for independent living and increasing voice, choice and control of older people with high support needs.

Purpose of Report

Written to inform local authorities and their partners about this project and its findings as they emerge; and to help them to achieve better outcomes for older people as well as best value in the use of public services and resources.

Plain English summary

'Emerging Lessons' has been written to help people planning and providing services for older people with high support needs. This includes older people who are living in care homes and those who are living at home with a lot of support.

It gives a summary of important lessons (so far) from a two year project which is being carried out in the South East of England. This project is aiming to find out what helps older people who need a lot of support to have more choice and control in their lives.

It also describes things that get in the way, and how to avoid this happening.

Main findings (so far)

- Strengthening the voice, choice and control of older people with high support needs takes time and effort to achieve. This is significantly because of the very low level of readiness that exists for adopting new ways of thinking and working with older people with high support needs.
- A second key message from SERI is the need for more detailed information and intelligence about this diverse group of older people—from statistics and projections through to local factors and individuals' circumstances and preferences.
- The voice of older people with high support needs is still very quiet at all levels of decision making and influence. A combination of very individualised support, community engagement and coproduction with local partners is essential for raising awareness, confidence, expectations and older people's influence in decision making - both in relation to the support that older people need and other aspects of their life if support needs are so high that they dominate everything else.
- Independent living for older people with high support needs should concern all public services, yet it is still often the case that responsibility is perceived as belonging almost entirely within social care. SERI sites are making most progress where action and resources are shared across housing, health, social care, transport and local community groups.



Main findings – continued

Further NDTi Insights:

“Supported Living – Making the Move”

Other Insights being published soon will cover:

Commissioning services for people who challenge

The transition of young disabled people into adulthood

Short breaks for disabled children

Working towards Age Equality in Health and Social Care

Five years on: lessons from the Dorset POPP initiative

www.ndti.org.uk/publications/ndti-insights

About SERI

For more information on the SERI Project, please visit the NDTi website

(www.ndti.org.uk) or call Helen Bowers on 01202 417423 or email

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- Older people with high support needs want to be and can be contributors themselves, rather than receiving services that “take care of them”. The sites have worked with older people to ensure the support they deliver enables this to happen, moving away from ‘organised’ activities which can inadvertently increase dependency, towards personalised approaches that meet individual needs and aspirations.
- A range of person-centred approaches exist to help plan and deliver better outcomes for people who need support, which the three sites have adopted with resulting benefits for older people, staff and families. Examples can be found on www.independentlivingresource.org.uk

Key messages

- A wide, holistic view of independent living for older people with high support needs – involving whole communities and all public services - is essential for efficiency gains and better outcomes to be achieved. This happens when politicians, policy makers, commissioners, professionals and communities work together to create the right conditions for change.
- A richer understanding of older people with high support needs is vital amongst local authorities and their partners. This results in greater engagement, a shared understanding about needs and gaps and agreement about the kinds of support that really make a difference.
- Moving towards coproduction – genuine and meaningful partnership working with older people with high support needs - is absolutely crucial to increasing the voice, choice and control of this group. This requires those who have power at the moment to share decision making and develop a different relationship with older people and other partners within their communities.
- We must stop viewing older people with high support needs as passive recipients of services and support. Support must enable older people to live their lives as they choose regardless of age, where people live or their impairment or condition.
- The same level of commitment given to transforming health and social care is now required to transform the expectations and experiences of older people with high support needs. The Readiness Check for independent living and older people at www.independentlivingresource.org.uk can help authorities determine where they are now and where to focus local resources and efforts to improve the life chances of older people with high support needs
- The SERI sites are developing: transport brokerage services for people in rural areas; peer information and advice for people living with dementia; circles of support for people living alone; brokerage support and person centred planning with people living in care homes; community connections and relationships for people living in care homes; local older people with high support needs as champions for change.



National Development Team for inclusion