



Legacy Plan for Connect Hackney

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Background

Connect Hackney aims to improve the wellbeing of Hackney residents aged 50 and over by reducing or preventing loneliness and isolation. The £5.8m six-year programme (2015 – 2021) is one of 14 programmes across England funded by The National Lottery Community Fund's 'Fulfilling Lives, Ageing Better' programme.

We are working with the diverse communities of Hackney and our [partners](#) to understand the different things that can help over 50s stay connected and active in ways that suit them. Our programme outcomes are:

Outcome 1: Increased numbers of older people who are socially isolated, engage in meaningful and enjoyable activities which result in new friendships, sustained networks, improved resourcefulness, more confidence and thus, ultimately, a better quality of life.

Outcome 2: Increased numbers of older people who are at risk of social isolation, engage in meaningful and enjoyable activities which result in new friendships, sustained networks, improved resourcefulness, more confidence and thus, ultimately, a better quality of life.

Outcome 3: Embed an asset model towards ageing and older people, where the latter are more actively engaged in the community and valued for the contributions they make.

Outcome 4: Increased direct involvement of older people as they age in shaping policy and holding key stakeholders to account, leading to stronger partnerships and more effective, better coordinated delivery which reduces social isolation.

During the period 2015-18 (phase 1), we funded over 20 community projects to tackle loneliness and isolation. Based on our [learning](#) from phase one, our current commissioning priorities for 2018-21 are:

- People with learning disabilities
- People from BAME communities (Turkish and Kurdish; Francophone Black African; Latin American (women); and Chinese and Vietnamese (who have originated from China))
- Digital Inclusion
- Community Connections
- Community activities in spaces for all
- Men
- People living with a mental health condition (Depression/ Anxiety)
- People who struggle to leave home regularly

The scale of the loneliness issue

Our programme outcomes data confirms that overall, the health and wellbeing scores of Connect Hackney project participants has improved as a result of their taking part in funded programme activities.

This is important because we also know that the impact of loneliness is far reaching, and has a detrimental impact on a multitude of health issues. The Campaign to End Loneliness states that there are number of health risks for being lonely:

- Loneliness, living alone and poor social connections are as bad for your health as smoking 15 cigarettes a day. (Holt-Lunstad, 2010)
- Loneliness is worse for you than obesity. (Holt-Lunstad, 2010)
- Lonely people are more likely to suffer from dementia, heart disease and depression. (Valtorta et al, 2016) (James et al, 2011) (Cacioppo et al, 2006)
- Loneliness is likely to increase your risk of death by 29% (Holt-Lunstad, 2015)

Based on our own evidence documented in our [Profile of social isolation among older people in Hackney report](#), we know that there are specific characteristics of Hackneys older population that place them at risk of loneliness and isolation:

- Living alone: 7,421 people aged over 65 live alone (42%)
- Social housing: Nearly two thirds of older people in Hackney live in social housing
- Caring: Older people in Hackney are more likely to be carers, 11% provided some unpaid care, compared with 7% of the population overall. There are approx. 17,385 carers in the borough
- Disability: Over 60% of Hackney's residents aged 65 plus describe themselves as disabled, rising to 85% of those aged 85 plus.
- Poverty: Hackney has the second highest score for income deprivation of older people in England (2015, excl. city). Hackney Wick, Kings Park and Woodberry Down are the most deprived areas.
- BME communities: Just over a third (36%) of respondents to the 2011 Census in Hackney described themselves as White British. The remainder is made up of black and minority ethnic groups, with the largest group Other White, 16.3% followed by Black African, and 11.4%. The number of Black Caribbean people has fallen slightly in the past 10 years. They now make up 7.8% of Hackney's population compared with 10.3% in 2001. BME people aged 50+ will make up 22% of the total 50+ population in England and Wales in 2051
- LGBT: Around 8% of Hackney's adult population (around 16,500 people) are currently likely to identify themselves as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Trans-gender. The 20 Profiling the needs of older people in Hackney (London Borough Hackney, 2015) Page 7 of 12 proportion of people identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual or other tends to decline with age21.

Connect Hackney is due to end in March 2021, when all funds from The National Lottery Community Funds, Ageing Better programme will have been exhausted. However, the stats paint a stark picture of the scale of the issue, and the health risks if the issue of loneliness and isolation

is not prioritised for older people living in Hackney.

Programme achievements

- We have reached over **4,000** older people living in Hackney through our network of delivery partners delivering activities to reduce socialisation and loneliness, and a further **800** volunteers
- Our outcomes data tells us that that **73%** of project participants have either improved or maintained their De Jong (Loneliness) score as a result of participation in a Connect Hackney funded activity.
- **79%** have either managed to sustain, or increase their social contact with friends and family following their involvement with a Connect Hackney funded activity.
- We have appointed **19** Hackney residents to the programmes Older People's Committee, developing our learning on how to work with a diverse group of older people, but has allowed them to develop new skills, and confidence to be able to be a part of decision making boards/panels
- Through delivery of our only in-house project, Media Group, we have delivered [Hackney Senior](#), a quarterly publication which has a current distribution list of over **4000** Hackney residents, who tell us it provides a lifeline for them to know what is happening locally, and hear from people similar to them, on issues important to them
- Through both our quantitative data, as well as qualitative data, we are building a picture about what works and what doesn't work to reduce loneliness and isolation amongst older people, and crucially why
- Last year, we set up our Learning Network for delivery partners to share learning, and allows a forum for reflective practice. This provides a useful forum for peer-to-peer learning to be shared, and extracted, but additionally, has cemented a network of partners collectively working to tackle the issue.

Programme learning

Some key findings on isolation gathered locally through the programmes delivery include:

- Older people struggle to get out and about and there is a high risk of frail people, disabled people, people with dementia and people with learning disabilities becoming housebound and suffering the adverse health effects of isolation
- The VCS struggle to find innovative ways to support people who need help to leave the house and funders are reluctant to fund projects which include support getting out and about
- Lack of benches and public toilets makes some older people reluctant to go out
- Gentrification has made many older people feel left behind and they feel there are fewer places to meet and socialise

- Outreach to isolated older people requires highly skilled staff but is often low paid, underinvested in and not recognised as a specialism
- Services for people with dementia and learning disabilities are at risk of low attendance or shutting down due to appropriate transport issues
- Hackney Senior (our quarterly print magazine) has benefitted from being co-produced with older people, amplifying their diverse voices and experiences (including experiences of ageing) as well as filling a much needed gap in providing information about local services and activities for older people

Legacy Objectives – 2019-21

During the period November 2018 to July 2019, we delivered a series of workshops to capture views from our [Strategic Partnership Board](#), [Older People's Committee](#), and [Delivery Partners](#). These workshops led to the following objectives being formed:

- 1. To embed the learning from Connect Hackney and the wider Ageing Better programme in the third sector**
 - Create learning papers that relate to programme outcomes which can be disseminated to influence service delivery within the third sector
 - Identify VCS stakeholders who we can engage to ensure learning is embedded to achieve the most impact for local older Hackney residents
 - Develop capacity of third sector to engage with and embed learning in practice
- 2. To influence strategic partners with the learning from Connect Hackney and the wider Ageing Better programme to deliver more effective services to older people that reduce social isolation**
 - Embed key learning among strategic priorities and policies within Hackney
 - Support and influence the design and scope of the Ageing Well Strategy
 - Support and influence the commitment for Hackney to become an Age-friendly borough
 - Use programme learning to inform navigation services across the borough via the Community Navigation System Design Group (CNSDG)
 - Engage with the Transformation agenda, via the Integrated Commissioning Board
- 3. To improve collaborative working across the sector to create better pathways for socially isolated older people to access wider programmes**
 - Identify the barriers that impact on clear pathways
 - Explore the feasibility of a forum for Delivery Partners and other interested VCS members to continue to meet beyond the lifecycle of Connect Hackney
 - Explore the feasibility of the Older People's Committee continuing beyond the lifecycle of Connect Hackney
 - Develop pathways for better collaborative working
 - Facilitate collaborative tendering / fundraising between DP's to secure sustainability funding for funded activities

4. To embed older people input in statutory decision-making structures

- Opportunities will be sought to have better representation of older people involved in decision making structures, which reflects the diversity of the older population in Hackney
- Build capacity of statutory and third sector on effective strategies for meaningful engagement of older people in decision-making
- Develop pathways for OPC to be involved in third and statutory sector consultations, governance and service re-design

We hope by achieving our legacy objectives, we will ensure that the design and delivery of services for older people living in Hackney will continue to provide opportunities to increase their social connections resulting in reduced levels of loneliness. This can only happen if community organisations continue to deliver activities, AND this is only possible if funding is made available. Our legacy plan is being delivered between the periods, Oct 2019 – March 2021.

How can members help us achieve our legacy ambitions?

Whilst the issue of loneliness and isolation is a national public health issue, it requires a bespoke local response. Connect Hackney has been leading the way since 2015, but the issue requires a long term, sustainable approach and therefore commitment from local public bodies beyond March 2021 when Connect Hackney ends.

We need support from the Heath in Hackney Scrutiny Commission members with:

1. Influencing City & Hackney CCG, and Public Health to commit to funding activities for older people to socialise, which our outcomes data confirms reduces feelings of loneliness and supports their ability to maintain contact with family and friends, as well as develop new social connections. This aligns with both the Prevention and Unplanned Care workstreams.
2. Help to secure funding for the VCS sector to enable it to play it's role as part of the new City & Hackney Social Prescribing and Community Navigation Service. There is a risk that whilst social prescribing is being recognised as a way to tackle health and wellbeing issues, the current approach omits the necessity for the VCS sector to be adequately resourced to meet the increased demand.
3. Exploring how issues related to transport can be addressed; which we know is a significant barrier for older people accessing local activities and services. A recent case involved a service for people living with dementia closing, not due to lack of demand, but lack of transport/support for would be service users to enable access to and from the service.
4. Provide guidance on the most effective ways to share and disseminate learning and key messages so that they can influence service design and delivery.