

Connect Hackney

Reducing and preventing the social isolation of older people in Hackney

Connect Hackney is a BIG Lottery funded project to reduce and prevent the social isolation of Hackney residents aged 50 plus. It is led by City and Hackney Together, a wholly owned subsidiary of Hackney CVS. The project has been developed in consultation with older people, supported by our survey of almost 600 older Hackney residents, and informed by a cross-sector partnership of voluntary and community groups, local authority, health sector and other public sector staff.

The project has four outcomes:

- **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:** Hackney sees a positive shift in attitudes 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 and 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.

We will be funding charities and voluntary and community groups to:

- Work with agencies such as health services, meals on wheels, homecare providers and beyond to reach out to and engage socially isolated older people
- Develop relationships with socially isolated older people, listen to their views, needs and suggestions and work with them to find appropriate support and services
- Find out more about the needs and interests of socially isolated older people and work with them to design projects and activities
- Deliver a travel buddy scheme providing 1-1 support to older people who would like assistance using transport
- Develop mechanisms to make local transport more 'age friendly', including influencing transport policy
- Deliver social and leisure activities based on the interests of socially isolated older people
- Work with older people to develop and improve the range of volunteering opportunities available to them
- Deliver a peer support service

Connect Hackney is underpinned by the following core values which will be further developed and refined over the lifetime of the project:

- Recognising Hackney's older population as an asset to our delivery and enabling their contribution and participation in all areas of the project including design, delivery, evaluation and management
- Working towards achieving a 'gold standard' of participation of socially isolated older people throughout design, delivery, evaluation and management

- Providing flexible, accessible and adaptable outreach, activities and interventions which respond to the diverse needs, skills and experiences of Hackney's older population
- Increasing the co-production of services, activities and interventions
- Developing effective outreach and engagement of socially isolated older people by working with services such as meals on wheels, chemists, homecare providers etc who are in contact with SIOF and also reaching beyond these services to people who are truly isolated
- Engaging older people who are at high risk of being socially isolated, such as people living on a low income, who are disabled, have a long term health condition, live in rented accommodation, are from an ethnic minority or have a low level of education
- Developing an understanding of the risk factors for social isolation including transitional life phases such as divorce, bereavement and retirement
- Creating bottom up consultation and policy participation mechanisms which do not result in language and literacy barriers preventing older people's participation
- Providing tailored interventions and culturally appropriate provision
- Improving transport options, accessibility and mobility of older people in order to reduce social isolation
- Increasing weekend and evening provision for older people
- Providing practical, low level assistance to address barriers to social participation
- Producing publicity and media content which is both created by and influenced by the needs and suggestions of older people including meeting WC3 standards and accessibility guidelines, including guidelines for producing content for people with dementia

From April 2015 we will be working with older people to develop the application form and scoring process by which we will select delivery partners. Older people will sit on the selection panel which will vet initial applications from charities and voluntary and community groups who will then be selected through a participatory budgeting process where a cohort comprised of public and third sector staff (25%) and older people (75%) will select delivery partners to fund. Older people will also play a key role in managing and measuring the effectiveness of all aspects of delivery and we will be creating a gold standard of older people's participation to work towards.

All of our delivery will adopt a 'test and learn' approach run by older people led Test and Learn groups to identify effective models and approaches and to work with delivery partners to re-design and trial different models. These groups will be supported by an external evaluation partner who we will commission support us to gather evidence and draw conclusions regarding the successes and challenges of delivery.

Please contact Judy Harris, Programme Support Coordinator at Hackney CVS for more information:

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