

## Good Practice Case Study



East Midlands  
Improvement and  
Efficiency Partnership

## Access to services for older people flies the flag for Nottinghamshire ▼



Resident who has used the 'Notts 50 Plus Scheme'



## Green Flag for Nottinghamshire County Council's access to services for older people ▼

Nottinghamshire County Council has been awarded a Green Flag for innovative approaches to the provision of wellbeing to its older community, through improved access to services and new preventative services in the form of the 'Notts 50 Plus Scheme.'

A 'whole-system' approach introduced partnership working relating to the development of low-level preventative services that have relieved pressures on the social care and health sectors providing quicker and more inclusive access for the older population.

*"'50 Plus' is a fantastic new adventure. Nottinghamshire County*

*Council is working with organisations across Nottinghamshire to provide people over 50 with the information, advice and services they need in order to be active and healthy, safe and independent for as long as possible in their own homes. '50 Plus' is about listening to what people want rather than just delivering the services we think they want. Older people are at the heart of this development – they're not simply recipients of services, they're very heavily involved in the planning and delivery of services."*

David Pearson  
Strategic Director,  
Adult and Social Care and Health

## Our ageing population ▾

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The older demographic is a particularly important area of focus, with recent statistics showing that for the first time the population of the UK has more people aged 60 or over than children under the age of 16 (2001 Census).

Nottinghamshire has 287,000 people over 50, which is approximately 36% of the total population and 135,000 over 65, approximately 17% of the total population. This makes this group a significant proportion of the community, and one that inevitably place pressures on the healthcare and social systems, as older people are their 'core' customers.

## Developing the 'Notts 50 Plus Scheme' ▾

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As part of the follow-on from the national LinkAge Plus Pilot Scheme, Nottinghamshire County Council, and its partners have adopted an ambitious programme of activities under the banner of the 'Notts 50 Plus Scheme.' Comprising a number of initiatives, the proposal was accepted with £1.04 million of funding allocated from Nottinghamshire County Council, the two PCTs, District Councils, and the Fire and Rescue Service.

A particularly important aspect of developing the '50 Plus scheme' was the drive by independent older peoples groups, such as the Older People's Advisory Group (OPAG), who contributed to the prioritisation of the services and activities they valued.

There are six distinct, but interdependent, strands of activity within the scheme:

- Better access to information
- Streamlined signposting
- Network of services across the county
- Involving the voluntary sector
- Promoting volunteering
- Monitoring and evaluation

## Excellent services for older people ▾

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The 'Notts 50 Plus scheme' provides thirteen new services and activities. The following three examples illustrate the diversity of these services:

### **First Contact Signposting Scheme**

This scheme enables older people to have easier access to a wide range of services, particularly for those identified as 'isolated' or 'difficult to reach'.

The services promote independence, wellbeing and active ageing by reflecting life needs of older people's activities and key features include:

- One simple checklist helps people aged 60 or over to access services allowing them to stay safe and independent in their own homes.
- Saves older residents, or their carers, having to contact different organisations separately – for example the Fire Service, Pension Service or Crime Reduction.
- The checklist has ten questions, which, once filled in, is sent to a single point of contact. Relevant partners are then contacted to follow up any identified needs.

This process has proven successful for the following key reasons:

- Key partnership working across 12 service providers in the county, has led to positive communication enabling them to troubleshoot quicker, thus creating a truly preventative service.
- Each question on the checklist has been carefully designed for ease of understanding by older people. One single question makes available all the services on offer by a particular organisation; there are on average 2.2 cross-referrals per checklist, for example a visit to fit a smoke alarm may result in a referral for a Warm Front grant or a crime reduction check.
- One central customer service point making referrals to the correct service provider has reduced waiting time for residents. If waiting lists develop feedback is immediately acknowledged and tackled as quickly as possible.
- Separate service providers no longer have to deal with queries that are not directly relevant.

### **Handyperson Adaptation Service (HPAS)**

HPAS is the result of a merger of two separate schemes – the Handyperson scheme and the Preventative Adaptation Scheme (PAS). The PAS provides aids around the home, such as grab

rails, to reduce the possibility of falls, therefore maintaining peoples independence for as long as possible. The Handy Person Scheme carries out minor jobs, which previously trades-people might have considered too small. HPAS utilises local traders people from the Trading Standards approved traders register 'Buy With Confidence'.

The two schemes initially ran independently but it was quickly realised that there was some duplication and the two should be merged. Benefits of the scheme can be found for both the community and the Council:

- Residents only pay a nominal fee but the payback is fewer hospital and care home admissions
- Residents can have minor tasks carried out that they cannot manage themselves, helping retain their independence
- Local tradespeople are used, therefore supporting small local businesses and wider economic regeneration
- The scheme relieves the burden on Social Care and Health who would be otherwise involved in complex assessments

*"Absolutely wonderful, I would recommend anyone to use this service. I can't thank them enough ... having the confidence of someone*

*there to help if I needed it was fantastic".*

Nottinghamshire Resident



Customer receiving advice from the Fire & Rescue Service as part of the HPAS scheme.

### **Community Outreach Advisor (COA) Scheme**

The role of the Community Outreach Advisor (COA) is to reach isolated or socially excluded people who would not otherwise access the services available for those aged 50 and over.

Employed by third sector organisations, the COAs concentrate on linking with hard-to-reach users within the community who would not be reached by First Contact. The COA provides advice, assistance and support to enable isolated people to access a wide range of services.

For residents COA support can come at just the right time, they have access to general advice on services, help with benefits, bathing equipment, and gardening. Often residents continue living at home, rather than be provided with residential care, and undoubtedly it can assist with their mental and emotional health.

## Early successes ▾

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Just two years into the project, Nottinghamshire County Council has found there to be a definite economic case for these types of early intervention. Within 18 months of launch of First Contact:

- The number of checklists exceeded those expected at the project inception by 84%
- The number of referrals exceeded those expected by 103%
- It is estimated that referrals for crime visits could yield taxpayer benefits of £28.70 from reduced expenditure on dealing with crime, with recipient benefits estimated at £53. In comparison the cost of a referral is £14.50

There are other key findings from the Department of Work and Pensions Evaluation for the national LinkAge Plus pilot which can also be transposed to Nottinghamshire, for example:

- Whilst up-front investment was required, the scheme quickly delivered net savings, breaking even in the first year after the investment period
- The net present value of savings up to the end of the five-year period following the investment is £1.80 per £1 invested. This is likely to increase over more time

As well as economic factors, the nature of these schemes makes it important that qualitative ‘emotional’ benefits are also considered when assessing the success of the scheme:

- The number of older people who have used the schemes since September 2008 until September 2009 is 7,460
- The outcomes of the schemes are a stated feeling of wellbeing, independence and safety, which is at the core of the LinkAge Plus philosophy

## Continuous learning ▾

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Nottinghamshire County Council has found that a whole-system approach, with an open, communicative and integrated programme has led to successes. But as with any project of this scale, there are learnings on how to continuously improve:

### Measuring results:

*Learning:* Low-level preventative action is notoriously different to measure – for example how can it be determined how many falls resulting in hip replacement have been prevented through mending loose carpets through HPAS. Although difficult, it is essential to monitor outcomes.

### Suggestions:

- Use cost analysis e.g. one hip replacement costs the healthcare system £24,425; one First Contact assessment costs £31.77; therefore, if by completing 8,004 assessments, one fall is avoided that may have resulted in a hip replacement then the scheme is successful on an economic basis
- Use national indicators available and transpose them to the specific region
- Research capacity is a key role within the team – demonstrating success is the best way to progress the programme

### Partnerships on board:

#### *Learnings:*

- Partners all have their own policies, changing priorities and strategic aims, which sometimes can conflict with a shared partnership programme
- It is essential to work with all partners to identify issues and avoid overlaps in services between organisations – this goes beyond joint working and requires joint funding
- Supportive political leadership in the Council is a pre-requisite

### Suggestions:

- Ensure the team is aware of policies and pressures that may impact on a partner. Having strong networkers in the team can help
- It is important to be able to ‘boundary hop’ across organisational cultures, to be open to working with other bureaucracies
- Seek peer and good practice support from relevant central and local government associations
- The voluntary and community sector is often more flexible and able to respond quickly to new

ideas and service development needs

- A high level of engagement of older people helps to bring partners on board

Nottinghamshire County Council also created a multi-agency Board that meets quarterly to assess any issues; a whole-system approach was developed for access to information, services and opportunities across a wide range of partner agencies.

### **Internal Culture:**

*Learning:* A positive, outcome-focused ethos in the project team is necessary to create services that are practical and effective.

### **Suggestions:**

- It is important to instil an outward-facing approach with regards to partnership working
- Nottinghamshire Adult Social Care and Health Department has adopted a proactive and whole-system approach when building relations with partners – both locally and nationally, liaising with central government departments such as the Department of Work and Pensions
- A consistently quick pace is important to identify and tackle issues quickly, in order to ensure programmes are as effective as possible

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## East Midlands Improvement and Efficiency Partnership Case Studies

The East Midlands Improvement & Efficiency Partnership (EM IEP) is committed to celebrating the successful, innovative and imaginative project work that exists in the East Midlands region.

The EM IEP Support Team publish case studies showing how East Midlands councils are improving services, and delivering significant improvements and efficiencies.

The case studies are intended to inspire councils in the region, and indeed nationally, to transform services and benefit from the processes developed by those councils that have pioneered the way forward.

Find out more about the Nottinghamshire 50 Plus Scheme at [www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/home/social\\_care/notts50plus.htm](http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/home/social_care/notts50plus.htm)

For all the latest news, guidance, good practice case studies and video case studies visit our website:

[www.eastmidlandsiep.gov.uk](http://www.eastmidlandsiep.gov.uk)