
Supporting older people to live independently

Summary Report October 2013 – September 2014

Keeping well in west Cheshire is a pilot programme which aims to support older people to live independently and was jointly commissioned by Cheshire West and Chester Council, West Cheshire Clinical Commissioning Group and Vale Royal Clinical Commissioning Group.

The delivery lead is Age UK Cheshire who worked with Snow Angels CIC to deliver the service.

The pilot programme has strong strategic links with a range of programmes including the Better Care Fund, Stronger Communities, Ageing Well, Self-Care, Choose Well, Bright Lives, Loneliness and Isolation, and Climate Adaptation.

keepingwell.snowangels.org.uk

The key elements of the service were:

- General communications with key messages about keeping well throughout the year aimed at older people, and targeted communications through community networks, events etc.
- Working with home visiting services to deliver key health messages and actions to help older people to continue to live independently.
- Personalised service delivered to older people by volunteers in key localities e.g. local Snow Angels programmes.

Key achievements

Reminiscence and social marketing project with older people about their experiences about health both pre and post the introduction of the NHS and consultation about communication e.g. older people's guide and calendars.

Development of an extensive communications partnership delivering key health messages to older people and key interventions to enable them to continue to live independently with over 100 local events attended, development of the Keeping well in west Cheshire portal providing a range of support materials to organisations including training and referral systems, and support to a wide range of organisations to provide key health messages through their own communication channels.

Pilot of analysis of nearly 6000 home visits leading to the introduction of Making Every Contact Count approach to home visiting services through training events e.g. falls prevention and distributing key health messages.

Development of a citizen led service - Snow Angels - supporting older people across localities in Cheshire West providing satisfaction rates of over 90% and increasing the personal resilience of older people, increased confidence in dealing with older people amongst volunteers, and an increasingly sophisticated case management system.

Development of local networks to build community resilience in Chester and Neston and surrounding villages and rural areas including Delamere, Ashton Hayes, Little Budworth, Wincham, and further development of existing schemes in Northwich and Winsford. Additional outcomes developed through the pilot have included working with partner organisations to enable two student placements to carry out research, additional services developed e.g. social activities and information point in Delamere, development of a Dementia Alliance in Neston, networking opportunities amongst partners, and external funding secured to enhance services.

Client stories

Mr and Mrs B

Mr and Mrs B live in Mid Cheshire in a semi-detached home which they own in a semi-rural area. They are both in their late eighties and whilst their son lives locally he is often away through work.

They have a regular weekly call and have a close relationship with one of the Modern Apprentices who makes the calls. Mr B has restricted mobility following a serious fall from the roof whilst repairing the TV aerial a few years ago and the initial request for help was about lowering the outdoor step. Following the successful resolution of this issue they are more willing to ask for help and advice, and to implement other changes in their property e.g. stair lift.

Miss G

Miss G lives in a village outside Winsford and is now in her early nineties. She registered on the Snow Angels scheme in October 2013 following a discussion with one of her neighbours who was already registered.

She had recently given up driving as her confidence had reduced following deterioration in her eyesight.

Her reason for registering with Snow Angels was initially to make sure that she would be able to have some basic shopping delivered if she was unable to get out due to the weather and she was happy with a more informal approach to support. Over the last six months one of the volunteers has become great friends and visits once a week to make sure that everything is OK – she also has a weekly phone call which is scheduled at the other end of the week.

Through the regular contact she has now got a local person who cleans for her to help with the heavier jobs, has registered with the assisted bin list, and is now going to employ a local gardener recommended by one of the other Snow Angels customers. She continues to live independently and despite missing the independence of being able to drive feels that there is a network of support available to her. She is now a great advocate of the project and is encouraging others to register.



Home Safety including falls prevention

Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service and Age UK Cheshire provide an integrated home safety service through the Springboard scheme which includes home visits and referrals to provide further supporting materials and is one of the largest provider of home visiting services in Cheshire West and Chester. Several different personal contingency plans were tested with Age UK Cheshire, and printed versions of the contingency plans were provided for the Home Safety Advocates to use in home visits.

We also worked with social landlords e.g. Plus Dane. The falls prevention project was carried out in March and over 80 people attended and the impact on organisations was extremely positive – the majority of organisations attending did not have falls policies in place.

“We have become more aware of potential hazards in the home and will be more pro-active in the future to highlighting dangers and potential solutions during home visits. We will also be more confident about making referrals to other organisations.”

“The training had a massive impact on our organisation - we are now developing a falls policy for our organisation and we have established cascade training for our staff.”



Reduce social isolation by community interconnections

There are a number of elements of this pilot which have had a positive impact on reducing loneliness and social isolation, particularly the weekly phone calls to older people registered on the Snow Angels scheme.

This service is provided by the Modern Apprenticeship team at Weaver Vale Housing Trust and they each have a caseload and update the case management system. The inter-generational aspect of this service has proved to be extremely successful and popular with the older people. It is also very popular with the team of young people at the Trust, some of whom refer to it as “the best part of the week” and their manager reports that it has a positive impact on their confidence.

Greater community resilience planning with local climate change adaptation

Increasing awareness about the impact of weather conditions on health and well-being has been carried out by the service.

In terms of local community resilience there are close links with both the Local Resilience Forums and the Climate Adaptation Team at Cheshire West and Chester Council and we are also working with a number of local communities who are developing Neighbourhood Plans and/or Parish Plans. These include Neston, Upton, Great Boughton and Vicars Cross, Wincham, and Ashton Hayes.

In some of the local communities we have worked closely with local people and they have provided information and advice to older people, or have provided alternative services including Whitegate and Marton Parish Council and Delamere Community Centre.

Affordable Warmth and home insulation advice

The Keeping well in west Cheshire pilot has worked with a range of partners who provide advice, information and practical interventions to help older people keep their homes warm. These have included the Green Doctor visiting scheme in Neston and surrounding villages, promotion of the partnership with Age UK and EON to provide free energy saving measures, and referrals to the Big Energy Network funded by DECC.

Keeping well in west Cheshire Portal

Part of the project has included developing a directory of services for older people in local communities, training guides and further information about a range of areas including falls prevention and fuel poverty, and weather related information and advice is provided through the Met Office alert system. The portal can be accessed here keepingwell.snowangels.org.uk

For more information about this project please contact **Cathy Boyd** on tel: **0788 151 0304** or email: hello@keepingwell.org



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in west cheshire