Ageing Better
Dissemination Events Series

What Next? Covid-19 Learning on Tackling Loneliness
20 October 2020

Synthesis Pack

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On the day

On Tuesday 20th October 2020 we convened a digital event, attended by approximately 120 people, for the following purposes:

- Reflect on Ageing Better and other organisations' learning from the Covid-19 pandemic on tackling loneliness - particularly around the need for a blended model of delivery.

- Discuss what the learning means to us all as we move forwards.

- Help connect organisations with each other, comparing and contrasting their learning.

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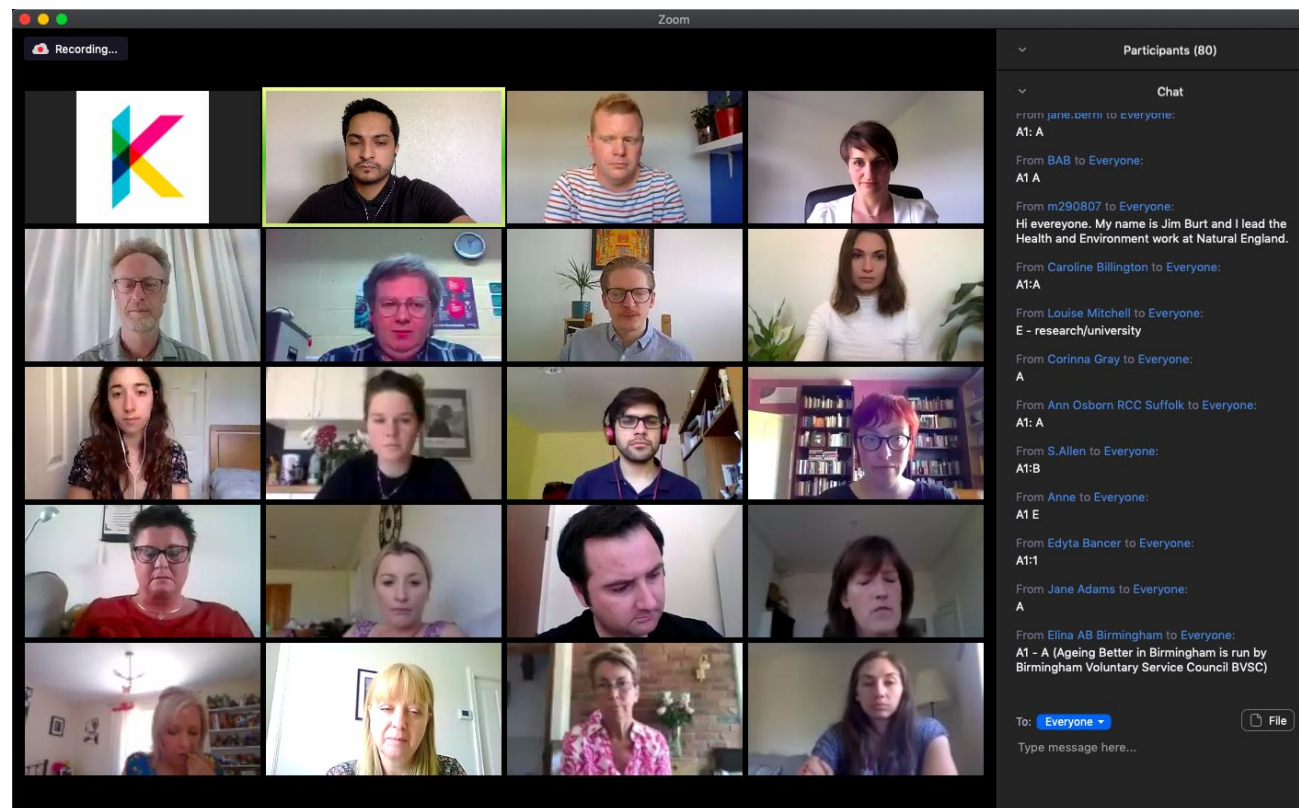
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On the day

We first asked participants:

How would you primarily describe your organisation?

A. VCS, civil society, community support or volunteering organisation working directly to tackle loneliness

B. Government e.g. local authorities, MPs

C. Health and social care organisation e.g. CCGs, GPs, social prescribing

D. Private sector organisation

E. Other

As shown in the graph on the right, the majority of participants (73.4%) belonged to category A.

How would you primarily describe your organisation?

E 11.4%
D 6.3%
C 3.8%
B 5.1%
11.4%
6.3%
5.1%
73.4%
A 73.4%

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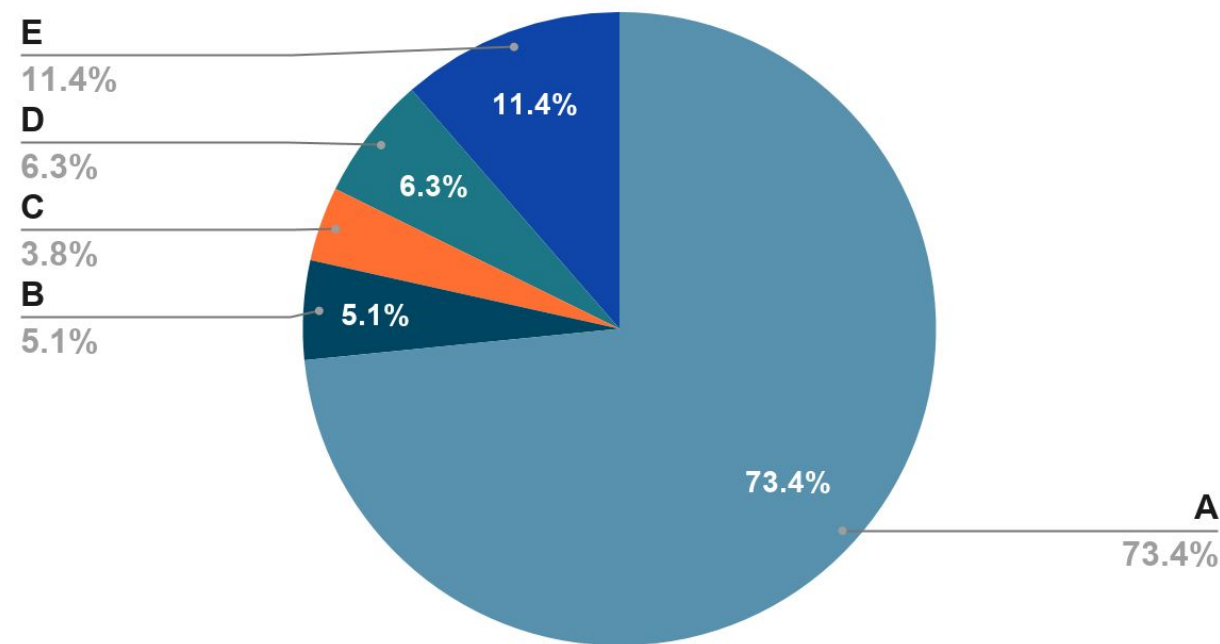
On the day

We then asked participants:

Question A2: Have you been to an Ageing Better event before?

A. No

B. Yes

As shown in the graph on the right, the majority of participants (78.8%) belonged to category A.

Have you attended an Ageing Better event before?

Yes
21.2%

21.2%

No
78.8%

78.8%

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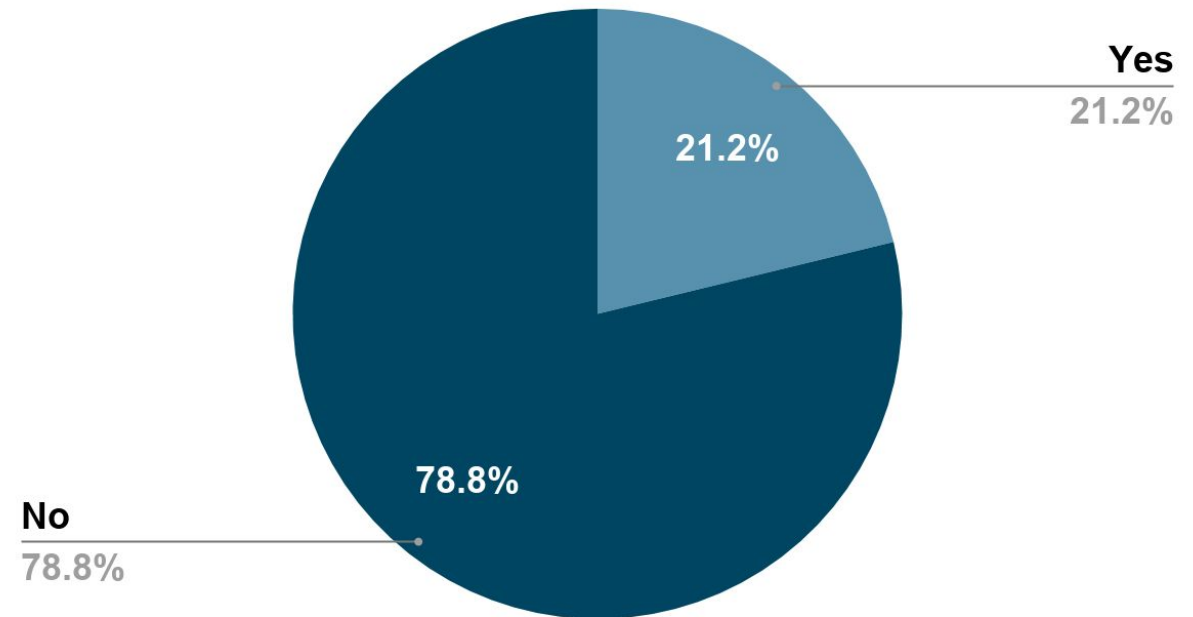
Speaker perspectives

Our speakers - four of the Ageing Better partnerships

John Hannen

Programme Lead

Ambition for Ageing, Greater Manchester

Annabel Collins

Programme Lead

Ageing Better in Camden

Edyta Bancer

Programme Delivery Manager

Age Better in Sheffield

Ruth Rigby

Programme Lead

Leicester Ageing Together

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Speaker perspectives - the overarching narrative

We heard perspectives from the Programme Leaders of 4 of the 14 Ageing Better programme partnerships. They outlined how they are now moving from a phase of immediate crisis response to developing a "blended" model of delivery suited to the next phase of the pandemic and anchored in the learning from and values of the previous five years of the Ageing Better programme.

Our speakers emphasised the importance of a person-centred response, meeting older adults where they are and recognising the diversity of needs. We considered how to restart face-to-face connection while continuing to deliver support remotely and the role of community connectors in enabling people to access appropriate support.

These themes are covered in more detail in the learning summary recently published by the Ageing Better team. You can find this and more resources on page 30 of this report.

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Speaker perspectives - John Hannen

John outlined that there are challenges for community projects to remain relevant in the wake of Covid-19. Ambition for Ageing extensive funding of over 14,000 small community projects helped to provide a wealth of community level solutions, through this evidence, they have extracted examples of solutions that could be adapted to fit the needs of communities experiencing a pandemic.

The team have developed a guide which can be found here.

The four leading principles underpinning this guidance includes:

1. Making sure we build projects on hobbies, or shared interests. The activity can be less important than the shared interest – for example people who like gardening may also like to talk about or read about gardening if the ability to garden with each other is limited (I.e. In the middle of a pandemic)

2. Building community connection in the widest sense can be a great help. For those able to do so, getting out and about can reduce isolation, for those who can't even just knowing what's happening can make a difference.

3. Realistic goal setting , be honest with people, and recognise that we may not be able to address all needs at this time, but that we can ease the situation people are in.

4. Getting the messaging right, the messaging we use should also be influenced by understanding how people perceive risk.

John Hannen

Programme Manager
Ambition for Ageing, Greater Manchester Centre for Voluntary Organisation

To listen to a pre-recording of John's presentation, please click here

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Speaker perspectives - Annabel Collins

Annabel's presentation focussed on the work of the ABC outreach team, and how they have adapted their programme during Covid-19 (from full lockdown to tier 2 levels of restrictions).

The core purpose of the outreach team is to find people that no one knows, they are not regular visitors to their GPs, they are not known to adult social care and they do not attend activities at their local community centre - meaning the team have to go out and find them.

- **Prior to lockdown -** The team would reach people via: street outreach, door knocking in sheltered and general housing, and hosting pop up events in sheltered housing and cafes.
- **During lockdown -** The team set up a telefriends service, matched 101 clients with 77 volunteers
- **Post lockdown -** The team had to think creatively and devised 'pop ups in the park', delivering socially distanced pop up events in parks across Camden. Free face maks were distributed as a hook, given that teas, cake and other usuals were no longer possible. Information was also distributed regarding local activities, this information was posted 'hyper locally'. These events were adapted, following the rule of 6. There have bave been 12 pop ups so far, meeting 224 older people. The team have met people who are alone, bereaved and who are keen to take up the opportunity for social contact.

In addition to the pop ups, the outreach team are also organising small groups for socially distanced walks, bookable by phone (aware of the limitations, but not possible otherwise). The aim of these walks is to introduce very local older people together and facilitate lasting ties, where they can go on walking together throughout the autumn and winter months. The feedback received suggests that it is the company people value through participating in these walks, helping to bring a sense of normality.

Annabel Collins
Programme Lead

Ageing Better in Camden

To listen to a pre-recording of Annabel's presentation, please click here

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Speaker perspectives - Edyta Bancer

Edyta set out how Age Better in Sheffield have adapted their work. She explained: "When we went into lockdown in March, we were acutely aware that we were not the crisis team, but we had a role to play in looking after our over 50s."

We joined the Covid-19 response hub, organised by voluntary action Sheffield. A good place to discuss needs with other voluntary organisations.

Activities within our blended approach included:
- Hello Sheffield Neighbour activity packs (information on help and services available in Sheffield - over 3000 delivered).
- 'Moments of Joy' music and dance programme (bringing creativity to people through music and dance, in care homes for example). This programme can be quickly adapted in line with government guidelines.
- Telephone befriending & counselling, heavily oversubscribed project - in addition to this Mind were involved in a 'listening line' counselling service, for individuals who needed specialist mental health advice.
- Safe one-to-one activities such as walking, cycling - all in line with government restrictions.

Edyta highlighted some positive campaigns for over 50's, these included:
- Cycling campaign, encouraging people to use cycling as a form of transport, gathered individuals testimonies to encourage more take up.
- 'We're getting through this' - A programme to change the perception that over 50s are the most vulnerable people in the pandemic, through highlighting individuals who made a positive change to their life during Covid-19 (move away from the rhetoric around suffering, shielding, etc)
- A mental health campaign

Edyta Bancer

Programme Delivery Manager
Age Better in Sheffield

To listen to a pre-recording of Edyta's presentation, please click here

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Speaker perspectives - Ruth Rigby

Ruth outlined Leicester Ageing Together's blended offer of 'Distant Socialising' initiatives, including:

- LAT website resources
- Telephone information line, staffed by community connectors - running on a strength based approach, encouraging people to phone and find out what they need to help get through this difficult time.
- Activity packs linked to WhatsApp and Zoom groups where possible.
- For individuals without internet access / can't use the internet - we're running a #DistantCompanions short term telephone wellbeing checks and befriending service. We're now moving into a strength based approach, connecting people using group chats rather than one to one calls.
- #DistantDigital - offering support to people to get online - Probably the largest element LAT are working on at the moment; purchased tablets, Mifi routers (to send out to people), have also provided learning resources to get people online, encourage group activities online. Planning on developing a **virtual community centre in the future**

Following discussion with community connectors, we have sent out a number of activity packs and daily challenges to individuals. These have included seeds and instructions for planting, colouring sheets and pencils, etc. We have also had daily challenges, focussing people on thinking and doing something they would not have thought about doing before and then giving them the opportunity to share their activities with someone else.

Our plans going forward include: retaining our blend of offers and incorporating a digital option in everything we do from now, retaining our focus on activities linked the five ways to wellbeing (above), and build our digital inclusion offer.

Ruth Rigby

Programme Lead
Leicester Ageing Together

To listen to a pre-recording of Ruth's presentation, please click here

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Reactions

Here is a selection of the reflections from participants following are speakers perspectives

It seems that COVID offered new opportunities to find older people who were previously unknown to services.

Decline in mobility a major issue - there's a real deconditioning epidemic that will affect both quality of life and life expectancy - walking projects really needed!

Person centred - find out what matters to individuals and then use that to connect them to their local community

It really hit me when Annabel said that for someone people life will not get back to "normal" in their lifetime...I think this is what makes it much different for older people than for the rest of society.

I love the activity packs!

Importance of being person-centred - will then help to find the individual "hook" for that person

The role of hope has also been identified as part of the CHIME framework of mental health recovery

How shared interests bring people together, but they don't have to be doing that specific activity, just that they have it in common.

Being creative in keeping people engaged and to avoid scaremongering - keep positive

Realistic goal setting - adapting what we can do - and getting something done even if it's not what we had planned originally/ or a full project

'Good news stories' in newsletters about how well other people are coping are useful in small numbers to inspire and give ideas, but need to be balanced with understanding individual challenges and supporting people to meet them. Resilience comes from hope for yourself given by moments of joy or a laugh shared rather than by comparing yourself with others.

Questions and highlighted challenges

Some participants had questions following the speakers perspectives, they are summarised here

We deliver services in a very rural area which makes connecting with the lonely and isolated more challenging

That's great especially for people that have good mobility, it's those who can't get out that I am having a challenge with.

I am interested to know what kind of risk assessments organisations are using to evaluate risks and benefits of the different in-person initiatives being spoken about.

Some older people don't feel like eating when they are alone...malnutrition combined with lack of physical activity is clearly bad for people, so I'm interested in work that encourages 'social eating' (even if its virtual).

Getting the messaging right in such uncertain and changing times- a challenge.

Dementia is a challenge, older people getting very confused. I would like to know others views on how to deal with this.

For us the challenge is getting people interested in connecting digitally.

Getting online is expensive- monthly commitment

What are your learning experiences from helping older people access technology? We have found a lot of people need continuous support with this to access activities on zoom etc

How are these outside activities going to work though the winter?

We have struggled for years trying to set up befriending support, people reluctant to commit to formal volunteering. Then lockdown happened and an amazing response from local people willing to deliver food and keep in touch with those they were supporting. That has led to what really is befriending- it's just not "badged" as that. Inter generation buddies as well.

Community organisations are worried about encouraging their members to use Zoom due to security and GDPR worries...also putting money aside to buy zoom licences which are eating into their budget

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Examples of other initiatives

Participants were invited to highlight their own activities, responses are summarised here

In North Yorkshire we introduced counselling under the telephone befriending guise

Good to hear other ideas. We are now doing 6 groups in the local pub for lunch or coffee

We create weekly email newsletters based on what people in our WhatsApp group have been up to and also share info about people who choose not to be or cannot use WhatsApp.

We have found that some people have TV packages with BT or SKY that does include broadband but they have never realised. We funded some sim-enable devices only to find that a few of the first recipients had something in place already. **So ask the questions, just in case.**

We are turning our main office into a community hub which will enable isolated older people to come to a space that is covid compliant, which will include an internet cafe, advice from partners and space for people to meet, this is because some of our delivery partners didn't have a space big enough to host people because of covid restrictions!

In an area of Birmingham which really lacked communal space and meeting points, we had a coffee cart set up on the grass verge and it worked. People were curious and liked that they could come and meet other residents - where they would normally not meet them as they didn't have the space for it.

We support people with sight loss - their world has become much smaller with lockdown. Particularly with the introductions of one way systems, unable to socially distance, etc

One of my favourite new initiatives is backyard coffee mornings, where the back gardens are visible to neighbours, which was adapted by residents with our support, where they didn't have back gardens, they approached a local hotel that was closed and now use their grounds to meet up for their coffee mornings, socially distanced of course!

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Useful links

Participants included several links to useful information and resources, these are included below:

- A link to Ageing Better learning can be found on their website here: https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/strategic-investments/ageing-better#section-4

- The suite of documents referenced by John Hannen are available on the Ambition for Ageing website here: https://ambitionforageing.org.uk/socialcontact

- A link to the 'Psychology of Loneliness Report' by the Campaign to End Loneliness can be found here: https://www.campaigntoendloneliness.org/wp-content/uploads/Psychology_of_Loneliness_FINAL_REPORT.pdf

- A link to example risk assessments by Ageing Better Birmingham can be found here: https://www.ageingbetterinbirmingham.co.uk/learn-more-get-inspired-by-stories/learning-resources

- A link to a recent film on Torbay's Covid-19 response can be found here: https://www.torbaycdt.org.uk/news/article/?id=f1881ff1-ed80-41a8-8fd7-6165fd368c09&category=General+News

- A link to 'Shine' in Leeds for 6 'Shine' magazines can be found here: https://timetoshineleeds.org/projects/shine-magazine

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Breakout rooms

Breakout rooms

Next, we divided participants into virtual breakout rooms to further discuss their experiences related to the following three topics:

1. **Restarting face to face activities**
2. **Continuing remote connection**
3. **The importance of community connectors**

The discussions within the breakout rooms are summarised on the following slides.

→ Joining Breakout Rooms...

Breakout Room 1
It may take a few moments.

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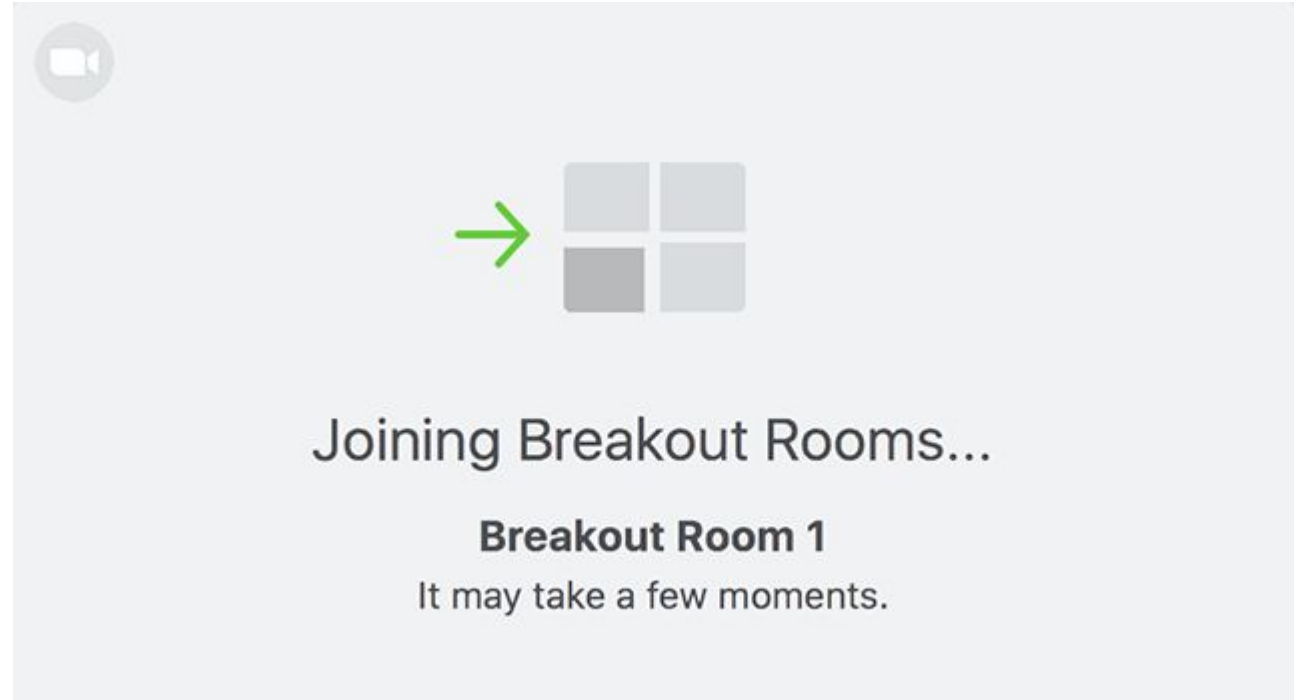
1. Restarting face to face activity

What resonated with you from the speakers?
- In some areas, volunteers have started to go back to face to face, some people don't feel comfortable but the volunteers play an important role in getting people out.
- Need to consider how we continue face to face activities in the winter (i.e. it could be too cold to go on walks)
- People are becoming prematurely housebound, we're hearing from a lot of older people that they are just deciding they are "never going to go out again."
- Role of services providing activities that 'coax' people out of their houses, for example, running 'fence time' (talking over garden fences).
- What we come across is that the anxiety of the older people is actually from family members. "You mustn't have people come to the door" etc.
- Risk assessments - reassurance for staff but also individuals to show how careful we are.
- Very few venues have reopened, and they are often expensive. Lots of charities don't have access to their own space.
  Need to balance people who are afraid to come out and those who can't wait to get out, this is where a blended model / offer is useful (e.g. yoga teachers bringing people in [socially distanced] as well as joining digitally).
- In Hackney, 'community connectors' are doing a 1-2-1 model of going to people and helping them get out. They are trying to initiate people back into the community.
- In residential homes they have used Sparko TV - a box is put in the older person's flat. This bypasses need to get online and it has tailored services. They work with a wellbeing coordinator who uploads information and activities to do in their own home, and it's regularly updated.

Key principles to take forwards on restarting face-to-face activity as we move through the pandemic:

- We should still strive to have F2F where people can and want it
- Finding appropriate spaces is key
- Learning networks and sharing resources (e.g. Connect Hackney) could help allow people to meet up in their bubbles
- Think about adapting activities to individual needs and groups - it's not a one-size-fits-all approach
- Consideration needs to be given towards staff welfare - It can be exhausting, People need to have space to have bad weeks and support themselves as well

1. Restarting face to face activity

What resonated with you from the speakers?
- Face to face support requires more planning / resource - e.g. supporting people to get where they are going, transport, pick up etc.
- People struggle to understand the current restrictions / rules because they change frequently
- The 'pop up in the park' initiative is a popular idea
- Difficulty supporting people with dementia, particularly face to face - people with dementia have seen really significant decline.
- Finding unidentified lonely out there - wouldn't normally have come across or reached. Organisations have databases but there are always people who are unknown.
- Can we be creative with the spaces we have? Community hubs might be too small to be Covid safe - can we work with partners in the community to find spaces that are appropriate.
- Question around how long term this will be, for some people they are supporting it will be forever.
- Some have seen the benefit of peer support, putting people together - going through same thing. Linking people based on hobbies and shared interests.
- Trying to find a balance between mental health and physical health... as long as staff are okay, we lean more towards keeping people connected.
- Some have taken a more risk averse approach and have not looked to bring people together f2f - based on local population and health risks.
- Services are torn in regards to when and what they re-open, particularly in light of another lockdown looming

Key principles to take forwards on restarting face-to-face activity as we move through the pandemic:

- Be adaptable and creative to enable new approaches
- Recognising different people see risk in different ways, so there needs to be different / blended approaches to meet each individual's comfort levels
- Cover yourself with robust risk assessments
- Activities based on shared interests
- Staff/volunteer wellbeing - some staff are suffering from burnout, haven't been able to keep a work/life balance and are struggling with the fact that they don't have all of the answers.
- Realistic goal setting and getting the messaging right

1. Restarting face to face activity

What resonated with you from the speakers?
- People are anxious, especially if they have been shielding they need support to come out (E.g. One organisation has created a video to show people their local community centre, and how it looks now in line with social distancing measures.
- Need to recognise that digital access is costly and that is a barrier - VCSE organisations are coming together to address these issues
- Need to consider the impact of location on how services are delivered, rural communities have less access to transport so face to face activity has been reduced significantly. Churches have often played a key role, however many are not resuming their 'normal' services (I.e. Teas / coffees before services)
- There may be potential to link with health services which are still seeing people face-to-face. However, some group members reported that all face-to-face services are halted in their areas.
- Keeping up momentum is a challenge, befriending services have noticed people spending less and less time on calls.
- Initially we moved everything on Zoom but we can't keep doing that – people don't want this anymore. This new phase requires a new response, something different to the crisis version
- Writing projects and telling stories, older people as journalists can all help people feel connected
- Winter weather – The need to create the right physical infrastructure to support continued meeting – buying furniture / gazebos / shelters to keep things weather proof.

Key principles to take forwards on restarting face-to-face activity as we move through the pandemic:

- We need to put energy into ensuring people don't become invisible
- We need to encourage people to do the small things that can help, such as checking on neighbours etc
- Recognise the need for partnership
- Really valuable to recognise that we are all in the same boat. We need to face this together
- Need to recognise that blended models create real strain on staff – new ways of working, managing multiple cohorts all at once – different skills – and all this come at costs

2. Continuing remote connection

What resonated with you from the speakers?
- This pandemic is going to continue for some while yet, need measures in place to respond to this
- Having platforms to socialise is useful - The pandemic has highlighted that a vital way of continuing connection is through telephone and online chat
- It's easier to connect face to face in urban areas (I.e. More transport, denser population). Remote connection can cover rural areas if they have the ability to connect.
- With winter coming, remote connection will become more important
- Lots of people are used to going out every day, so some don't take to platforms such as Zoom. How to get service users digitally interested? Packs to help older people to get online for example.
- Befriending can be difficult when volunteers are from different age groups, or have different views from older friends
- Befriending services are crucial. Can we triage volunteer staff? This might help with volunteer matching (get information on interests, hobbies, likes and dislikes). There needs to be more learning around matching people up

Key principles to take forwards on continuing remote connection as we move through the pandemic:

- Volunteers need support too
- We need to get equipment and connection to those people who aren't, but want to be connected online
- Link digital with physical (e.g care packages, activity packs)
- Connect with local experts and share knowledge and experience to move forward
- Connection is a lifeline
- Telephone contact is still a key lifeline for many. Support for walking out is also key as people have lost confidence
- Be creative in your thinking about what can be done remotely.
- Telephone befriending services should be here to stay, pandemic or no pandemic
- Talk to users, listen to their needs and try to meet the demand in a creative flexible way

3. The importance of community connectors

What resonated with you from the speakers?
- There is strong evidence of a variety of initiatives and a can do attitude.
- We need realistic goal setting, and understanding that we can't help everyone - the importance of person centered solutions
- The principles of delivering services hasn't really changed…but the way that we deliver them has (uptake in telephone services).
- People are isolated, a lot don't have computers or tablets, services are stretched - ultra local responses have been more common.
- Struck by how flexible charities have been, it also pays to be flexible when looking at it from a funding angle.
- Encountered a lot of risk averse tendencies in the voluntary sector and a lack of clarity from in local areas about what we can and cannot do.
- Covid brings a sense of fear to all, volunteers and beneficiaries, people want to do what they can to help, sense from others that the risk is too high.
- Explore linking older people together, utilising people's existing networks
- Regarding community connectors, there's mixed feedback in the community; where it's done well, it adds value, but to help someone on a journey is more complex than showing a flyer. Where it's done badly it can add pressure on services.
- Challenge for community connectors - separation between people already known to services and those who aren't. Challenge for how services can make new connections during tighter Covid-19 restrictions.
- I have also had the comment from my clients that they want to die living, rather than live dying

Key principles to take forwards on the importance of community connectors as we move through the pandemic:
- Connectors need support to do their jobs in times of uncertainty (also consideration for capacity / resource)
- Very local and up to date knowledge matters
- Local solutions are key - garden visits, enabling face to face contact whilst outdoors and social distancing
- Need to ensure ideas are shared
- Think outside the box, what can we do right now?
- "If you walk 100 steps from your front door, what is available to resource, support and nourish you?"
- Always be ready for change and be flexible to meet people's needs as they change
- We need different approaches to ensure that there is something for everyone
- Having that person who is able to be that one source of knowledge related to services and activities

3. The importance of community connectors

What resonated with you from the speakers?
- Services role in being the 'glue' has become so much more profound during Covid-19, linking people up to between groups etc
- The role of social prescribers has been highlighted
- Place based aspect has been removed, you don't have to go anywhere to take part in online activities - this excludes some, but can also be inclusive for others, this may be why those who were lonely before are less lonely now- because there's more going on, accessible to people.
- Experiences on Zoom, the depth of sharing has been very impressive.
- Can people afford to become digitally connected? It is also difficult explaining the benefits of investing in digital technology to some clients.
- A lot of the groups that we have worked with during this time have built up even more resilience, and have put specific strategies in place to keep on top of loneliness.
- There's a real opportunity to think outside the 9-5 , Monday-Friday delivery
- Struck by Camden, intensive outreach - seen the value in this through creating support links.
- I really liked the idea of a 'virtual community centre' - Could be the role of a community connector to be involved in the delivery of this?
- What is the role of a community connector, when there is not much energy (or facilities) within a community? How do they have a vision whilst not taking over.
- There still needs to be a presence in communities - Going where people still go, shops, faith, streets and parks - physical closeness.
- Ageing Better partner organisations have had to repurpose their role during COVID and many are naturally assuming a community connector/link worker type role.

Key principles to take forwards on the importance of community connectors as we move through the pandemic:
- Be where people still go - There are still community venues that are not 'optional' for those who need support. For example, offering support and information in medical services, pharmacies etc. Creating an opportunity to reach people
- Value of partnerships - The more groups working together towards a common goal, the more that can be accomplished
- There is real value in making digital more accessible, but doing it through community and peer learning rather than one-off courses
- Make Every Contact Count i.e. the nature of informal conversations with potentially lonely and isolated older people
- Adapt, don't stop services and support, keep it running - if it's working in other areas see what can be replicated
- Delivery partners are the people who are close to communities, use their intelligence for co-production don't guess what people may want / need
- Takes longer to support older people to become digitally inclusive, more thought on staff resource
- A wider definition and understanding of the term community connector, the term is being used differently all over the country.

Summary of key principles

Across all groups, there were several key overlapping principles when considering support in the future:

1. The importance of sharing learning and resources

2. Adapting activities to individual needs and groups - it's not a one-size-fits-all approach

3. Services need to be adaptable given our current (ever-changing) circumstances, flexibility within services is also key

4. Be creative ("think outside the box") and enable new approaches

5. There is real value in making digital more accessible

6. Local solutions are increasingly necessary and effective

7. The value of partnerships - the more groups working together towards a common goal, the more that can be accomplished

8. There needs to be different / blended approaches to meet each individual's comfort levels

9. Consideration needs to be given towards staff welfare. We need to reflect that this work can be exhausting, people need to have space to have bad days/weeks, support themselves and be supported by others

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One key reflection

What is the one key reflection you'll take away from your breakout session?

Very local responses work….but how do we ensure that everyone has a local response in a more fragmented pandemic over winter?

Connectors are so important in neighbourhoods where there is not a lot of community activism/activity

Continue to adapt services and let people know we are here for them.

We have to be together on this difficult time!

Connecting friends and neighbours, over services which may finish.

Crucial to share learning and ideas. There have been really interesting ideas today and it's important we signpost each other's services.

Where possible and safe, we should still strive for face-to-face contact

Importance of blended, flexible delivery models

Useful to find out what other organisations are doing and support is available

Be flexible in your approaches and set realistic goals.

There are so many more resources out there that I have never heard about before.

Be where people still go

Need look after staff and vollunteers. It's okay to not be working at 100% pre-covid capacity and it's important to regularly remind yourself and colleagues about that.

Outdoor plans will hopefully still be possible over the winter depending on tiers, but plans must ALWAYS be 'waterproof'

Telephone befriending is so valuable, can we - triage befriending volunteers, match the right people?

Must have a blended offer and consider accessibility and inclusiveness as the digital offer will not always suit.

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More useful links

During the breakout discussion, participants referred to more useful links for information and resources. These are summarised below:

- A useful website to connect community volunteers to the work you do - https://www.helpmystreet.org/

- The Befriending Network have made most of their resources free during Covid 19 for any group starting a befriending service https://www.befriending.co.uk/resources/covid-19-support/

- The Befriending Network are also looking forward to celebrating this year's Befriending Week from 1st to the 7th November. The theme this year is #BefriendingIs and they are inviting organisations, volunteers or service users to share what Befriending is to them. They have a whole load of free downloadable resources on their website here. Share your great stories around reducing loneliness to their Twitter @befriendingnet or Facebook @BefriendingNetworks

- Sparko TV is UK-based service-tech startup and is endorsed by AgeUK, UK's leading housing associations, and a number of other charity organisations: https://sparko.tv/

- Time to Shine (Leeds) have created the following document around reopening venues: https://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/assets.timetoshine.co.uk/Re-opening-venues-for-indoor-activities_July-2020-1.pdf

- Ambition for Ageing have also produced this document which may act as a useful design principles and challenges checklist, related to developing social contact models in a social distancing situation: https://www.gmcvo.org.uk/publications/developing-social-contact-models-time-social-distancing-0

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Closing reflections

Reflections

Thank you. This was very interesting and helpful.

It's been wonderful hearing what everyone is doing up and down the country and good ideas, also to know we are all facing the same challenges

Thanks to all, so many brilliant ideas

Really good to be able to share and learn what other organisations are doing to adapt their offer and support the over 50s

Final thoughts from event participants

Sharing information, getting new ideas, not feeling as if I am working in a vacuum.

Being able to chat to other organisations about problems or sharing information was really helpful

Good opportunity to share knowledge, learning and ideas

Thank you all, a very well organised and meaningful event

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Evaluation

100 | % of participants would recommend an event like this to a colleague

Average Score: | **4.6**

98 | % of participants found the event relevant and useful

General reflections on the event

- Good speakers, lots of knowledge sharing, inspiring content.
- Excellent ideas and networking especially during the pandemic
- Useful forum and really good attendance so lots of opportunity to share good practice.
- It was beneficial to hear from other organisations facing the same issues as mine

Aspects of the event that could be improved:

- Use Zoom polls rather than the chat
- Encouraging all participants to contribute in breakout groups
- Guidance on how to get 'gallery view' on iPad
- Keeping track of links, resources etc, on chat
- Hearing more about the impact of Covid-19 on BAME communities and how loneliness and isolation is being tackled

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Covid-19 – Transition Phase

As we went into lockdown, we wrote a short paper with our ideas on the impact of Covid-19 based on 5 years learning from Ageing Better, the cessation of face-to-face methods of delivery and move to that of telephone and online and implications as we all experienced some form of "social isolation". During the lockdown we began collecting in-time thematic learning resulting in our two reports on Telephone Befriending and Bridging the Digital Divide.

Read the briefing

Bridging the Digital Divide – Learning from Ageing Better

Many Ageing Better programmes and delivery partners have worked hard to continue to deliver as many elements of their previous face-to-face offers as possible but in different ways. These include telephone support as well as digital offers. The impact of Covid-19 may be long lasting and considerable and for many people making the transition from being offline to being online would be enormously beneficial for a wide range of practical and social reasons.

Read the report
Learning snapshot - Key messages

Telephone Befriending – Learning from Ageing Better

The majority of delivery within Ageing Better to date has been via face-to-face activity but once the Covid-19 crisis happened, areas quickly reconfigured services so as to be able to deliver as much as possible via telephone.

The aim of this report is to quickly share what we are finding works and what pitfalls to try and avoid. We will aim to update the learning as we progress through the Covid-19 shut down and as new learning emerges.

Read the report
Learning snapshot - Key messages

Telephone Befriending – Update

We revisit learning from areas undertaking telephone befriending to provide an update in July 20.

Read the report update

Ecorys COVID19 – Response and Longer Term Recovery

The Ageing Better programme has responded to the impact of COVID19 by dramatically redesigning projects and support to ensure that the impact of the pandemic on marginalised and vulnerable communities of people aged over 50 is minimised. The programme has worked closely with its evaluation partners and will produce a series of rapid reports into the impact of the pandemic on the communities it supports and the strategies our partnerships have undertaken to support people and maintain social connections at a time of physical distancing.

COVID19 - Rapid report #3 – Healthy Lifestyles
COVID19 – Rapid report #2 – Neighbourliness and reciprocity
COVID19 – Rapid report #1 – How we are responding

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Thank you

Thank you for such constructive input to the session - we really appreciate it.

For more information, please see The National Lottery Community Fund Ageing Better webpage.