



Kent Sporting Memories

Background

Kent Sport will be leading on delivery of the Kent Sporting Memories pilot project in partnership with Sporting Memories Network (CIC). The pilot project will develop reminiscence activities that improve the mental and physical well-being of older people (50+) and those living with dementia through tapping into their passion, knowledge and love of sport. The innovative projects will be multi-faceted and provide opportunities for inter-generational and cross community projects that utilise the power of sport to unite people, communities and regions and build social capital and mental resilience.

Further information about the project partners is available on their websites:

- Kent Sport and Physical Activity Service: www.kentsport.org
- Sporting Memories Network: www.sportingmemoriesnetwork.com

Project summary

To initially set-up ten Sporting Memories Groups in various settings across Kent to promote the mental and physical wellbeing of older people specifically targeting those at risk of social isolation and living with dementia and/or depression. The groups use reminiscence and light physical activities with sporting themes to engage older people who are otherwise reluctant to join in with other activities traditionally provided in community, day care and sheltered housing settings.

Sporting Memories Network (SMN) have already set-up over eighty groups around the UK in partnership with local authorities, CCGs, NHS, sports clubs and third sector organisations. Based upon this wide experience, the focus for the project in Kent would be to set-up new groups in a range of settings including sports clubs and facilities, sheltered housing (open to non-residents, as well as, residents), libraries, community centres and care homes. Elsewhere across the UK targeted partnerships with local authority library services and specific housing associations have been identified with the assistance of the National Housing Federation, as well as, strategic partnerships with major regional sports clubs and the support of national sporting bodies like the Professional Footballers Association. All the groups which have been established to date have settings provided by participating organisations 'in-kind'.

Group facilitators and supporters for groups would be made up of volunteers and organisational staff, depending on the settings. Full training would be provided along with supporting resources and an ongoing programme of "action learning" sessions which enable those trained on a regular basis to share experiences, learn from each other and network. This is a tested and well established model for delivery that has proved successful with projects across the Country.

Key beneficiaries, their needs and issues.

The key beneficiaries will be isolated older people experiencing mental health issues such as dementia, depression and social issues such as loneliness and loss either in their own home or in residential settings.

Local Statistics:

- Kent has an older age profile than the national average with greater proportions of people aged 45+ years than England. 6

- 38% (576,800) of Kent's population is aged 50+ years. 6
- 22,000 people in Kent and Medway are living with dementia. 5
- 47% of those people do not feel part of the community. 5
- 2.2% will develop dementia before the age of 65. 5

National Statistics:

- 5,000,000 older people nationally experience depression. 1
- 51% of all people over 75 live alone and 5,000,000 older people say the television is their main form of company. 2
- Social Isolation has been identified as having the same negative health impacts as alcohol and likened to smoking 15 cigarettes a day. 3
- 670,000 people live with dementia.

The weekly nature of Sporting Memories groups enables them to become part of an older person's routine and offers a meaningful solution to isolation. The programme of activities developed by the groups would include light physical activities / sports and day trips.

As Sporting Memories groups have developed over time, peer support beyond and outside of the groups have become an increasingly apparent outcome.

SMN seeks to engage volunteers largely from the same age group who may themselves be at risk of physical or mental ill health but will benefit from engaging in the project. In other groups around the UK, SMN has had people who have suffered from depression or have a diagnosis of dementia facilitating or supporting groups. Residents of sheltered homes have also been encouraged to take on facilitating or supporting roles.

1. Royal College of Psychiatrists, Public Health Position Statement 2010
2. NHS Choices <http://www.nhs.uk/livewell/women60-plus/pages/loneliness-in-older-people.aspx>
3. Smith TB, Layton JB (2010) Social relationships and mortality risk: a meta-analytic review. PLoS Medicine 7(7). www.plosmedicine.org/article/info%3Adoi%2F10.1371%2Fjournal.pmed.1000316
4. Living well with dementia; a national dementia strategy Department of Health 2009
5. Kent Dementia JSNA Update Update 2013/14
6. Office for National Statistics (ONS) 2015

Project Impact

The Kent Sporting Memories pilot project aims to improve the mental and physical well-being of older people and reduce isolation and loneliness. By establishing Sporting Memories Groups in accessible local venues that provide stimulating, therapeutic, mental, physical, social interventions and friendship, older people, particularly those who choose not to engage in activities traditionally provided, will engage in activities that will help build emotional and physical resilience, provide opportunities for friendship and peer support and increase social participation for those at significant risk of isolation.

Evaluations undertaken by SMN to date have established that their model of regular groups does have a positive impact on both isolation and wellbeing across a wide variety of settings.

The projects will also offer an attractive opportunity for older people to engage as volunteers in the community, including tenants of sheltered housing, with a variety of roles including group facilitation, assisting with groups, befriending, collating materials and memorabilia. SMN have seen a large number of volunteers who have joined their groups who have not been attracted to volunteering for work with older people before, especially older male sports fans and former players (both amateur and professional).

Funding is being sought to cover project costs for year 1 which would include:

- An area project coordinator would be recruited and supported for an initial one-year contract to lead on delivery of the project and support the volunteers (This could be a seconded position).
- Ten locations/organisations will be identified across the Shepway & Dover Districts to host Sporting Memories Groups.
- At least two staff or volunteers would be trained from ten organisations as early adopters.
- Each location would receive a copy of the training manual, replay cards, weekly copies of the Sporting Pink reminiscence newspaper and some sports/activities equipment.
- Following training, all participants would be brought back together periodically for facilitated action learning sessions to allow for reflection, practice sharing and updates on resources.
- We would also work in partnership to identify opportunities for 'memories games' and other intergenerational activities with an initial focus on raising awareness about the project and a particular health issue such as dementia.
- Monitoring and evaluation of the project.
- It is proposed that facility costs to host the groups and volunteers time would be given in kind.