



**CONNECT
HACKNEY**
ageing better



Supporting older people to get out and about

Connect Hackney Key Messages

Where has this learning come from? The recommendations below come from over 25 Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) projects funded by Connect Hackney¹ which work with socially isolated older people in Hackney. Our learning is drawn from the experiences of older people, project staff and formal evidence from the evaluation of Connect Hackney projects by the University of East London.

1. Connect Hackney is one of 14 programmes in England funded by the National Lottery Community Fund. In operation since 2015, Connect Hackney aims to reduce social isolation, improve the wellbeing of older Hackney residents and to share the learning.



How comprehensive are these recommendations? This document is focused on the particular issues that our projects have faced and the solutions they have developed. It reflects our current learning and will be added to as the programme progresses

1. Voluntary and community sector projects can provide support and motivation for people to get out and about more

- Peer led groups can increase older people's confidence and enable them to visit new places together and make the most of London's free attractions
- Providing fun, creative, educational and social activities for older people which fit their interests can increase their motivation to leave home and join in
- Home visits are an important way to gradually support people to overcome psychological barriers to getting out and about
- Technology such as transport apps and Google images can be used to encourage people to go to new places and get to know their local area
- Staff led group trips beyond local locations can enable people with language barriers to go to new places and explore the city

2. Projects which aim to reach isolated people should anticipate transport issues and develop ways to overcome them

- Projects which include funding for transport and/or chaperones can better reach people who are isolated or at high risk of isolation
- Providing chaperones for physically disabled people and those with dementia or learning disabilities can enable them to access activities in the community
- Partnering with local transport providers can enable a project to reach people who have challenges getting out and about
- Offering activities out in the community can mitigate some of the impact of inaccessible transport services

- Funders seeking to address the issue of isolation should be open to funding transport provision and chaperones

3. Getting out and about depends upon having somewhere to go

- Markets, libraries, garages, local shops and community centres are valued by older peoples as places to go outside the home
- Informal meeting places are part of the social infrastructure of a neighbourhood and are crucial for creating social networks
- Consultation methods should enable older people to be involved in planning decisions to help create age friendly environments

4. Areas for further development:

- Seasonal changes often impact levels of participation in voluntary and community sector (VCS) projects – these barriers need to be better understood and ideas developed to mitigate the impact of shorter days and cold and wet weather
- The VCS should be supported to develop new project ideas for people who are confined to their home
- Increasing the social engagement of people who are at risk of or already confined to their home should be prioritised by the public sector since it is an important element of preventing worsening health – a lack of social contact exacerbates many health conditions
- Taxi services, public transport and community transport services should be encouraged to better meet the needs of older people