



Carers First - TED Men Do Toolkit

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This toolkit has been developed by TED Ageing Better in East Lindsey, with the assistance of Carers First.
To find out more about the work of TED visit www.tedineastlindsey.co.uk or call 01529 301966

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Welcome



The increasing ageing population means that by 2037, a quarter of the total UK population will be over 65. Lincolnshire, and in particular East Lindsey will continue to have a higher than national average number of older residents. Projections show that by 2041 30% of the Lincolnshire population will be over 65, while in East Lindsey this will be 40%. This presents challenges but also opportunities in terms of how we deliver our services, our businesses and for our local economy.

We believe in supporting people to live and age well in East Lindsey and beyond, and to constantly find ways in which to do that across all of our services and partnerships. Similarly, we know that there is fantastic work happening elsewhere across the county and beyond.

Supporting people across all of our communities to live and age well is important for so many reasons. Wellbeing, independence, physical health, mental health, financial wellbeing, prosperity, inclusion, happiness, comfort....the list goes on. The TED programme is working in numerous ways to reach out to those in the community to become engaged in activities and events to help them feel more connected and supported.

East Lindsey District Council has made a commitment to support people to live well for longer and is part of the UK network of age friendly communities.

Michelle Howard
Assistant Director for People
East Lindsey District Council



As an elected member at East Lindsey, I am proud to have been involved with the development of TED Ageing Better in East Lindsey from the start of the programme. In my role as Older Persons Champion at East Lindsey, it is wonderful to see TED reaching its aim of reducing social isolation and loneliness, improve connections and access to community resources. East Lindsey is fully committed to ensuring we provide an inclusive and age-friendly environment for residents and visitors, of which Age-friendly businesses play a pivotal role.

This commitment has also resulted in East Lindsey employing its first Age-friendly Principal Officer, co-funded with TED, with the aim of achieving Age-friendly Community Status as recognised by WHO.

I am delighted to be the Executive Councillor for Better Ageing, a newly created Portfolio. Through my role, I will ensure the legacy of TED continues for the benefit of our community.

William Gray
Portfolio Holder for Better Ageing and Older Persons Champion
East Lindsey District Council

TED Ageing Better in East Lindsey



TED Ageing Better in East Lindsey is one of fourteen partnership programmes funded through The National Lottery Community Fund - Fulfilling Lives: Ageing Better Programme, each of which is exploring creative ways for people aged over 50 to be actively involved in their local communities, helping to combat social isolation and loneliness.

TED is a partnership of older people and voluntary and public sector agencies, led by YMCA Lincolnshire, working closely with East Lindsey District Council to reduce social isolation and loneliness that many older people in the district experience.

The overarching outcomes of the TED programme are:

- ▶ Older people will be better connected with volunteering, social, leisure and health improving activities leading to an enhanced quality of life.
- ▶ More older people will report that they do not feel lonely or isolated.
- ▶ Older people will feel positive about the opportunities that getting older presents.
- ▶ Older people will have more opportunities to influence the design, delivery and evaluation of services and businesses available to them.

TED has developed innovative and creative ways for people, aged over 50, to be actively involved in their local communities, and have created a significant number of new volunteering opportunities. Having worked with over 500 volunteers who have collectively contributed over 8000 hours of their time. These volunteers have additionally reported a range of benefits to their own health and wellbeing as well as the development of new skills, and a greater appreciation of social isolation and loneliness in their communities.

TED has taken a test and learn approach to identifying and designing services and solutions to meet locally identified needs. As a result TED delivers services across East Lindsey through a combination of direct delivery from the team and commissioned partners. These services include:

► **Friendship Groups (YMCA Lincolnshire TED team)**

TED's self-sustaining, volunteer led Friendship Groups are designed to bring people together in a social setting. TED sees the benefit for older people getting together in groups as this enables friendship to develop and the ability to share ideas and support each other.

► **Age-friendly Business Awards (YMCA Lincolnshire TED team)**

TED has developed an Age-friendly Business accreditation for businesses that meet the strict criteria designed by TED in co-production with older people from across East Lindsey. Successful businesses receive an accreditation certificate and sticker to go on their window to show people they have achieved the quality award.

► **Men Do - Male Carers (Carers First)**

TED Men Do works with male carers and offers creative ways for them to be more social and actively involved in their local community. Using a personalised approach, Men Do develops the confidence of male carers using befriending, mentoring and buddying initiatives.

► **Befriending (Age UK Lindsey)**

The TED Gateway to Friendship Befriending Project offers one-to-one support and friendship to vulnerable and isolated older people.

► **Gateway to Friendship Lunch Clubs (Age UK Lindsey)**

The TED Lunch Clubs are aimed at those older people who may have been missing out on regular social contact, serving fresh, home cooked food. They are a key part of our work to relieve loneliness and prolong independence in later life by providing a meeting point for older people in the community.

► **Digital Skills Training (Lincs Digital)**

The TED Digital Skills project offers outreach digital support sessions which include an awareness of online safety, finances, communication and shopping. Sessions are designed around the needs of those attending and often differ between venues.

► **Fitness, Food and Friends (Magna Vitae)**

The TED Fitness Food and Friends project offers outreach sessions which bring people together to learn about ways in which they can help themselves to improve their physical and mental wellbeing.

► **CHAPS (Magna Vitae)**

The TED CHAPS project recreates traditional social and working men's clubs with a view to engaging men in Mablethorpe, Skegness and Winthorpe. Using sport as a theme, weekly sessions offer opportunities for men to meet and socialise whilst doing familiar and popular working class past times including playing darts and dominoes, and watching sport and talking about sporting memories.

► **Specialist Advice (Citizens Advice Lindsey)**

TED offers a range of advice, casework and specialist support including support with complex financial, debt and housing issues. Our goal is to help people find a way forward, whatever problem they face by empowering them to make decisions and change their circumstances for the better.



Learning is a key feature of the programme and regular learning reports are produced and publicly available on <https://tedineastlindsey.co.uk/learning/>

Key areas of learning include:

- The role of housing in reducing social isolation and loneliness in East Lindsey
- Increased inclusivity and reaching and engaging people who are LGBTQ+
- Engaging lonely/socially isolated older people
- Age-friendly and Accessibility
- Engaging Businesses
- Supporting and engaging older men in East Lindsey
- Supporting male carers in East Lindsey
- The role of Friendship Groups in tackling isolation and loneliness
- Communication
- Working in Partnership to tackle isolation and loneliness

Ageing Better in East Lindsey

East Lindsey is a large, sparsely populated district with a higher than average ageing population where 29% of people are aged 65 and over, with a predicted annual growth rate of 1%, double the national average. Although the last 40 years has seen continuous growth in life expectancy, this is not generally reflected in levels of good health, with healthy life expectancy decreasing, and the gap between healthy life expectancy and life expectancy widening. High numbers of older people move to East Lindsey in their retirement years and many have multiple chronic health conditions and few social and familial connections locally. Public transport across East Lindsey is poor and therefore accessing services can be challenging, especially for older adults.

These challenges present significant issues in relation to health and social care, increasing isolation. Local services are having to change to support this ageing population, yet have decreasing financial resources.



50% of people over the age of 75 live alone, with many reporting that television is their main form of company.



17% of older people stated that they go for a week without speaking to a friend, family member or neighbour.



11% reported that they can go for more than a month at a time without any form of social interaction.



Loneliness has been linked to an increase in risk of death by 29%



East Lindsey District Council has pledged its commitment to be a member of the UK Network of Age-friendly Communities. As the first District Council member, East Lindsey joins the growing movement to make places more age-friendly.

In conjunction with the Centre for Ageing Better, the programme looks to foster healthy and active ageing making it possible for people to continue to stay in their homes, participate in the activities they value, and contribute to their communities, for as long as possible.

TED has also begun to identify links between those who experience loneliness and isolation and an increase in ill health, an increased risk of mortality, higher rates of emergency admissions, re-admittance to hospital and earlier entry into care homes. Loneliness and isolation are also linked to depression and poor cardiovascular health.

But there is hope, as TED impact analysis indicates that our interventions aimed at reducing social isolation and loneliness have the potential to have significant impact, including:

76% of individuals have more social contact following participation in TED activities

75% increasing their participation in social activities as a result of TED

70% of TED participants feel better connected to others





Together, East Lindsey District Council and YMCA Lincolnshire via TED Ageing Better in East Lindsey have formed a unique partnership and are working towards achieving Age-friendly Community status for the East Lindsey District, as recognised by the World Health Organisation (WHO) Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities.



“Delighted to welcome East Lindsey as the first district council to join the UK Network of Age-friendly Communities. East Lindsey has joined a growing movement of cities, counties, towns and city regions across the UK who are committed to putting older people at the heart of plans to make their place one where people are able to live healthy and active later lives. We look forward to working alongside East Lindsey to ensure that people are in safe, accessible homes, have the opportunity to stay in fulfilling work and live in connected communities, and where importantly, no one misses out on enjoying a good later life.”

Anna Dixon

Chief Executive of Centre for Ageing Better



“This is impressive news for the residents of East Lindsey. Becoming a member of the Network builds on the excellent legacy of TED and creates a positive transition when the project concludes in 2022, which will enable the important work to be continued in preparing communities to age better. It is imperative our residents are part of this journey and their input will be beneficial in informing our strategies and projects.”

Councillor **William Gray**

Portfolio Holder for Better Ageing and Older Persons Champion
East Lindsey District Council



“We are thrilled that our collaboration with ELDC to create an Age-friendly Community is being recognised nationally. Membership of the Age-friendly Communities Network will enable us to share learning and best practice with other communities whilst supporting us to progress our work towards East Lindsey becoming the first Age-friendly district in the UK.”

Amy Thomas

Communities Director
YMCA Lincolnshire

What is Age-friendliness?

An age-friendly world enables people of all ages to actively participate in community activities and treats everyone with respect, regardless of their age. It is a place that makes it easy for older people to stay connected to people that are important to them, and it helps people stay healthy and active even at the oldest ages and provides appropriate support to those who can no longer look after themselves.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) have identified eight ‘domains’ each of which should be looked at through the lens of age-friendliness in order to ensure equality of access to services.



Outdoor Spaces and Buildings



Transportation



Housing



Social Participation



Respect and Social Inclusion



Civic Participation and Employment



Communication and Information



Community and Health Services

This toolkit sets out the development and delivery of a men only project designed to tackle social isolation and loneliness, predominately targeted towards older male carers and ex carers. It is estimated that the economic value of the contribution made by unpaid carers in Lincolnshire is £1.76billion with an estimated 83,370 people providing unpaid care for family and friends.



Whilst he goes to other groups (such as Dementia support), because he can, he isn't really interested in what they do. He said he has sat and done flower arranging because its on offer but its not his interest at all. He said "that with the Men Do project there is no pressure, the banter is great and there is a different dynamic because its only men."

About this toolkit

Our aging population is growing, but interestingly the population of older men is growing faster than that of women. Furthermore, the number of men living alone in England and Wales is set to grow from 911,000 today to around 1.5million by 2030. As a result of this ageing and growing (male) population, research conducted by Independent Age and the International Longevity Centre UK (ILC-UK) in 2013 shows that men are now beginning to experience higher levels of social isolation than women, with an estimated 1.2 million men experiencing moderate to high levels of social isolation, compared to 1 million women.

However, a greater number of women still reported feeling lonely – 5.4 versus 4.2 million. This figure may not be a true reflection of the feelings of loneliness amongst men, as some men may feel it is less socially acceptable for them to disclose these feelings than it is for women to do so. This is despite the reasons why people feel lonely or isolated such as living alone, losing a partner, retiring from work, moving to a new area, health problems or a disability, caring for someone, or living with hearing loss being just as applicable to men as they are to women.

Why focus on older men?

Research has suggested that men are less likely than women to seek medical help or engage in programmes designed to impact their health and wellbeing. Coles et al., (2010) suggest two factors that help explain this. Firstly, they note how there is now a body of evidence that highlights a number of structural barriers, including health professionals’ gendered attitudes and behaviours, and the ‘patriarchal’ nature of the NHS that hamper and constrain male help-seeking behaviour.

Secondly, Coles et al., (2010) suggest that male barriers to accessing health and wellbeing groups are often related to masculine norms and gender roles, where hegemonic masculinities, or dominant notions of gendered identities (strong, independent and self-reliant) influence the attitudes and behaviours of men. Concealing emotional and physical fragility (Luck, Bamford & Williamson, 2000) and an aversion to help-seeking (Frosch, Phoenix & Pattman, 2002).

In addition to these socio-cultural factors, health related programmes and services are not always designed around the needs of men, and research points to gaps in provision for particular groups of men, including older men. There is also a preference among men for different activities compared to what is often offered, where programmes are seen as being ‘too social’, or as ‘exercise classes for women’

Furthermore, the low number of males involved in facilitating or partaking in these sessions is also off putting for other males who would prefer to socialise with men (Addis & Mahalik, 2003; Noone & Stephens, 2008).

Despite this information being widely available from various sources, a number of health and wellbeing interventions targeted at men are still predominantly designed and facilitated along traditional gendered stereotypes and a ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach. That’s not to say that this is an ill-fated approach, as evidence (see Smith, Braunack-Mayer, Warin & Wittert, 2007) does highlight how masculine culture can support, rather than inhibit health promotion activities. However, by challenging these hegemonic stereotypes, and by broadening the spectrum of activities offered, it may reap greater rewards and address a wider range of men, maximising male participation in programmes that can impact on their health and wellbeing.



“Now, I don’t want to seem rude but sitting around drinking tea and coffee is just not for me. This [Platform 50 Men’s Gym Take-over] is perfect really, just the job. It has to be things [activities] that people want to do, and it has to come from the people”

(Frank, Service User)

Tackling Social Isolation and Loneliness in Older Men (Carers and Ex-Carers)

Traditionally, interventions designed to tackle social isolation and loneliness have been designed on a gender-neutral basis, not focusing on men or women in particular. Anecdotal evidence, however, shows that these services are often disproportionately used by women. Data from the Common Measurement Framework (CMF) also highlighted how this was a problem for TED with only 38% of the members in April 2019 being men. In response to this, there has been a rise in the number of ‘male-specific’ interventions, for example Mens Shed that have taken into account the views of men and shown a degree of adaptability in order to respond to their needs and preferences. A point that is echoed by Dickens et al., (2011) and Gardiner et al., (2016) who respectively note how interventions with older people are more likely to be effective if the beneficiaries are active contributors to the planning and running of the group, as well as the delivery and structure of the group being flexible to shift with changes in group dynamics and needs.

In East Lindsey there are 1,232 carers aged 50yrs+ registered on Carers First's internal carer database alone, of whom 444 (36%) are male. Although this does not reflect the true number of male carers and it is recognised that older carers, especially, can be hard to reach and many don't self-identify/recognise themselves as being carers, considering their role to be that of duty, ‘just a part of being a husband, father or brother’.

The Carers Trust state that 42% of unpaid carers are male, 26% care for more than 60hrs a week. They can find it harder to ask for help and balancing their work and caring is challenging if they are the main earner. Male carers who are not working because of their caring role or who are unemployed can feel especially isolated with 8 out of 10 feeling they miss out on spending time with other friends and family members. 56% of male carers (18-64yrs) said being a carer has had a negative impact on their mental health. The Mental Health Forum (2014) revealed that more than 1/4 male carers in employment said they don't describe or acknowledge themselves as carers, resulting in them missing out on vital support. In addition, they identified there is a need to provide opportunities for carers to pursue their own interests and activities away from caring and have chance to share experiences with other carers in similar positions.

LincolnshireCounty Councils Carers Annual Report (2017-18) identifies that providing early help is more effective in promoting wellbeing than carers reacting in a crisis. For some taking part in social activities can be very difficult. Their survey revealed that: -

- 33% carers have as much social contact as they would like
- 81% don't have enough control over their daily lives
- 82% don't spend enough time doing things they enjoy
- 19% feel that they neglect themselves
- 56% have a disability and 48% a long-standing illness
- 31% report problems connected with aging.

The Lincolnshire Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (2016) identified a gap and unmet need to develop carer friendly communities to help address challenges associated with social isolation and loneliness. Where carers needs are not identified and addressed it can lead to a breakdown in care that they are able to provide to loved ones. This increases the likelihood of unnecessary emergency hospital admissions for the carer and cared for.

Understanding The Male Carers needs

Carers First's Carer Support and Assessment Coordinators (CSAC) have identified, through face to face and telephone assessments, that social isolation is a huge challenge for male carers with one carer saying ***"I need a break from the same four walls"***. Carers report that they are unable to maintain relationships with friends and family due to their caring responsibilities and can become isolated. CSACs have identified that male carers, in particular, tend to be less likely than females to access carer services/breaks and this can compound issues of isolation. In addition, when a carer completes the Carers Outcome Star section regarding 'time for myself' it is evident that many have stopped doing things they enjoy and are feeling socially isolated.

Through focus groups and a baseline survey, based around social inclusion, carried out in Mablethorpe, Skegness and Louth they can understand the needs, challenges and barriers to some of the older male carers. Male carers expressed, that as a result of their current or previous caring role, they:

Have lost social connections

One carer said, ***"You lose friends, social contacts, no-one wants to know"***, when talking about being forced to give up work, because of their caring responsibilities. Work is how social connections are made, particularly for men, and can be lost if a carer must give up work.

Another carer feels that people are embarrassed by his wife's dementia and his caring role, he says ***"They just don't understand"*** and ***"gradually you lose touch"***.

Older carers may lose joint interests or a shared social life through caring and/or after their caring role ends, time spent caring, we heard, ended friendships and interests outside of their home (as above), which can leave former carers in an extremely lonely, isolated situation.

Other carers talked about moving to the seaside or beautiful countryside from larger cities to enjoy their 'later life' together, and have now found themselves in a caring role, but further away from the friends and family that would normally be able to support them. Carers that have moved, had fewer community connections as a consequence, and a lack of confidence in building these.



Have lower levels of confidence

2 in 5 carers said they felt less confident in general social groups since becoming a carer with some carers experiencing mental health issues, such as depression, as a result of their caring role. One carer said they feel less anxious when attending the wellbeing group specifically for carers as, *“I feel supported, I can take a short break, connect with other carers and be reassured that there are other people experiencing similar situations”*.

Have less spare time or restrictions on their time

Most carers reported having restrictions on their time. With one carer saying *“I can’t go out for a drink in case the phone rings and it’s mum”*. Other carers feel they can only leave the person they care for where paid carers come in for a short while or they have support from other family members. Some carers work round a strict routine based on times to administer medication, lunch etc. With one carer saying he feels like *“he is on call 24/7”*. All of the carers spoken to feel like they have less spare time for themselves as a result of their caring role.

Neglect their own mental and physical health

The carers spoken to say that they prioritise the person they care for, often neglecting their own needs as a result. 36% of male carers care for 50+ hours a week, older carers can be consumed with their caring role, putting their own interests and needs to one side.

The Jo Cox report (2017) on loneliness, identified that 40% of unpaid carers said being able to take part in leisure activities would make the biggest difference in combatting loneliness. The State of Caring Report (2018) highlights that 72% and 61% of carers have suffered mental or physical poor health respectively as a result of caring.

Have their own health issues

Whether or not from self-neglect, as above, 26% of our carers report their own health condition as being a factor that prevents them from meeting friends and family, attending groups or activities.

Have difficulties accessing services

East Lindsey is the 33rd most deprived local authority in England and scores low (34/326) for health deprivation and (94/326) for barriers to access services and housing. Its rurality, poor public transport networks and roads also makes it challenging for carers to access support services due to cost and distance. 62% of the carers spoken to said they weren’t able to get to groups and activities. One gentleman said *“he is only ever able to attend things that are local, as he has given up his driving licence and public transport is not available.”* Another gentleman said you have to *“take into account the extra travel time”* and *“I can’t be away from my wife that long”*.

Are financially constrained

Many of the carers spoken to said they feel under pressure financially, as their caring role means they cannot work. As well as some having the additional demands of paid care services, adaptations and equipment to budget for.

Are not catered for, in terms of services

Even where services are available locally or are accessible by public transport the carers we asked said *“they had a lack of interest in what is available”*. One gentleman said *“tea, jigsaws and chatting with a group of women just isn’t for me”*.

There seems to be a lack of communication around service provision too, with one gentleman saying *“no one asks us what we want to do”* and even when groups and activities are available, our feedback suggests they are not widely promoted, with carers not being aware they exist.



Programme Planning

With a good understanding of the myriad of needs, challenges and barriers to overcome the project needs to have a very bespoke and tailored approach to be successful.

When planning the programme it is important to consider the following headings:

Things to consider:

□ Content

Planning and producing a programme that will be of interest to the audience (men over 50), something that is fun, unusual, exciting or perhaps a ‘money can’t buy’ experience that will really attract a beneficiary, where, otherwise they might overlook the opportunity.

□ Location

Think about where the majority of beneficiaries are located, perhaps they are clustered by towns? Make it easy for them to get to events by planning them locally to where they live. Some events can be organised in multiple locations e.g. Banter Breakfasts or Pie and Pint events, planning local events like these also promotes good social connections between local beneficiaries and increases the possibility of beneficiaries meeting independently.

□ Transport

Where events and activities cannot be planned locally, consider beneficiaries access to transport.

Own Transport – Are they able to use their own transport? Even though a participant has access to their own transport they may be unable to drive due to health complaints or uncomfortable driving in certain situations e.g. driving at night or in busy towns and cities.

Public Transport - Think about whether public transport is available for use and whether beneficiaries are able to access this. Do they have a time-table? Are they able to get to the nearest bus stop/station? Are they able to afford the cost?

Lift Sharing – Where participants are able to use their own transport try and encourage lift sharing, as this not only benefits the non-drivers,

it also helps to build good social relationships between all the participants. Whatsapp groups can be set up to help with lift sharing information and requests or simply a contact list to aid the organisation of lift sharing amongst themselves.

Community Voluntary Car Schemes – Voluntary car schemes are usually available for medical appointments; however, some schemes also appreciate there are real benefits to social appointments and will transport beneficiaries to social activities and events. Booking this service usually needs to be done at least 1 week in advance and the cost is usually 45p per mile.

Organised Transport – Hiring a bus or minibus is always a good option, where an event is planned further afield, and for a significant number of beneficiaries. Bus trips are a great way for participants to sit together and get to know one another. Consider an appropriate amount of pick up/drop off points to ensure best access.



❑ Service Providers

It is important when booking activities and events to communicate well and form good relationships with service providers. Explaining your project and how it is benefiting the participants is a good start and will often help with negotiating a good price or better terms. Supporting local businesses benefits everyone. Creating a Contact Directory of good providers can make organising events again easier.

❑ Suitability of the event

The old adage 'you can't suit all the people all the time' is most definitely true, however it is important to consider the needs of all participants on the project and although a single event or activity may not always meet the needs of all, consideration should be given to;

Abilities/disabilities of participants - Ensuring disabilities are catered for in advance, whether this includes wheelchair access or the loop system for hearing aids etc. In terms of ability, it is important to help them push themselves past their comfort point, as this can produce positive results of challenge and achievements among participants. As Jeff said after Ten Pin Bowling: *"I know I am going to feel this in the morning, but its been well worth it"*.

Time/Day/Duration of event or activity - Some participants may have constraints on their time e.g. those with caring roles that only allow them to take a short break from the caring role. Some participants might still work or volunteer and are constrained by certain days and some participants prefer not to partake in activities that are organised in the evening or early in the morning.

Top Tip: Always confirm bookings and contact service providers prior to an event or activity to provide accurate numbers and/or any changes either you or they have made.



Top Tip: Always consider, where possible and within budget, using a taxi or personal door to door pick up to include a participant, where they want to engage, but due to transport restrictions are unable.

"Gets me meeting more people and lifts me mentally. Socialising is very important for me – I live on my own and finish up talking to myself...not good"

Marketing and Promotion of Offer

Now that the project is in place and the programme is planned, it is important to tell everyone about it. Importantly your own service users, but also those service users of other similar support agencies and community organisations and of course any new and potential users. Giving the project a recognisable brand or designing a simple logo can help with the promotion and marketing.

1. Identify Beneficiaries

The simplest place to start in identifying the beneficiaries you want to target. Try starting with your own current business database system, where you should be able to report by age, gender, geographical location etc.

Once you have contacted your known service users you can throw the net out further to identify any new potential beneficiaries. Business to business marketing is important here, getting other, similar, agencies and organisations on board and asking them to share the project with their own service users will massively increase your reach to potential beneficiaries, as well as the following methods.

2. Communication/Marketing of the Offer

- **Write a letter**, a simple introductory letter, and post to those eligible on your own database is a good start. Mailed letters are not the most cost-effective option, especially when sending in bulk, but are likely to be most accessible, especially considering the target audience and their potential lack of access to the internet and email. A letter can explain the project and invite them to register their interest and/or book a space on planned events.
- **Introductory emails** should be sent out to all partner organisations or similar support agencies and community organisations, such as:
 - Social Service agencies,
 - Housing authorities/residents associations/neighbourhood groups,
 - Mental health associations,
 - Social prescribers and care navigators,
 - Service associations (the Rotary, etc.),
 - Veteran groups, and
 - Local political figures

It is important to explain the project, including its aims, objectives and eligibility for beneficiaries and asking them to share the invitation with their own service users and requesting referrals from them. It is useful to make a contact directory for these organisations as it makes future sharing of information easier.

3. Social Media and Press

Can be used as a cost-effective tool to reach a large audience. Posts can be targeted specifically towards potential beneficiaries, as well as their family and friends, who may be able to promote the project to them, directly, if they themselves do not use social media. As can be the case with older male carers.

Older people are more inclined to read the Local Press and Editorials or Articles meaning they are useful in getting the message out locally.

4. Partnership working

Can have wide benefits for all and can allow access to beneficiaries that are already accessing support or provision in the community. Making face to face drop-ins at community organisations, meetings and groups, such as:

- Clinics
- Hobby groups
- Libraries
- Village halls/Community centres
- Recreational groups
- Religious groups
- Support Groups

Allows you to spread the word in person letting potential beneficiaries ask questions and be reassured if they are uncertain or unconfident.

5. Network events and Community events

Are also great ways of sharing information directly and face to face to both organisations' representatives and service users, often allowing them to see in person what the project is about.

6. Word of mouth Recommendations and Referrals

Are probably the most gratifying and effective way of sharing information about the project to new and potential beneficiaries, as recommendations from family and friends can reassure the potentially reluctant beneficiary that it is a trusted or valuable project that is worth giving a try. This has been successful in increasing participants by 12% in this project.



Promotion of the Offer/Programme of Events

Now that everyone knows about the project it is important to promote what it can actually offer in terms of support, activities and events. It was important to promote a clear programme of activities and events for a set period of time, monthly/quarterly. This allowed beneficiaries to:

- Have a good understanding of the types of activities and events that were on offer.
- To choose the events they wanted or could attend, without the pressure of feeling like they would need to attend everything. Feedback shows that this pick and mix style suits male carers, they feel like they can make a decision based around their caring role and responsibilities and their interests. Without feeling a pressure to attend everything like a traditional weekly or monthly support group might.
- Plan in advance and perhaps arrange alternative care for the person they care for, so they can enjoy a break from their caring role.
- Know that this was not a 'one-off' and they could begin to make connections with other participants on the project, allowing them to share their situations and build friendships.

Feedback from other support agencies like Wellbeing Lincs was that quarterly programme planning was useful to them in enabling their support staff to use it to form a support plan for their clients and more easily make a referral to the project.

This long-term programme planning also allows you to advertise the programme in local monthly/quarterly community newsletters and guides.

With the programme planned, it is important to design the advertising material, considering clear communication regarding the activity or event details including, dates, times, locations and transport where necessary, eligibility, booking contact details and information regarding a zero cost. Designing a branded and consistently recognisable poster and flyer for the quarterly programme, as well as specific individual events can then be promoted through:

- Direct and electronic mail to participants or potential beneficiaries and other community support organisations and individuals
- Displays in community venues and notice boards
- Flyers given out at Community/Networking events or drop-in sessions
- Newspaper/Newsletters and 'Whats-On' Guides
- Partner organisation own advertising materials
- Social Media, where it is also possible to use pictures from an event to advertise future trips.



Delivery of Programme

With a programme planned, promoted and beneficiaries booked to attend it is crucial that the delivery of the project works and beneficiaries feel supported, enjoy themselves and get value from the project.

A Project Lead

The project is committed to being bespoke and tailored to the needs of the beneficiaries. The key to this is having a dedicated and enthusiastic Project Lead ‘on the ground’, who can react quickly to provide the highest quality experience for each and every participant. A Project Lead will ensure the practical organisational aspects for the smooth running of events and activities, including:

Risk Assessments

A formal risk assessment should always be carried out before embarking on an event or activity, but situations can often be different on the day and a more informal continuous risk assessment should be used ensuring safety, considering risks such as: participants abilities, the weather, environment etc.

Good Communication and Reminders

Are a good way of encouraging the more hesitant or unconfident beneficiary, which we know from understanding the older males needs, they can be. Making sure all beneficiaries have the details for an event and a simple text reminder or a telephone call a couple of days before the event provides reassurance. They are able to discuss any worries or issues they have regarding the event and they can no longer use the excuse ‘sorry I forgot’. It also provides an actual reminder to participants with memory issues that very well might forget.

Transport

We know, through understanding male carer needs and more generally, residents in rural East Lindsey, can struggle with transport issues. Providing personal transport, arranging a lift share, taxi or additional bus pick up/drop off point for an individual, may be the difference between a beneficiary being able to participate or not.

Unexpected Incidences, General Supervision, Payments and Signatures

Dealing with a double booked restaurant or requesting additional places, or things like counting beneficiaries on and off the bus and not leaving anyone behind. Paying the bill at the end of a Banter Breakfast or signing an invoice all help to make an event go smoothly and leave the beneficiaries feeling at ease and that someone is in control.

As well as the less tangible aspects of hospitality

Providing a consistently 'Welcoming Atmosphere' and making beneficiaries feel comfortable is so important to the participants confidence and overall enjoyment of the project and events and can be key to them being at ease and able to make initial connections. Introductions are essential along with the careful consideration of helping to match beneficiaries and encourage and foster those emerging relationships.

Top Tip: Send an SMS Text reminder message to participants the day before an event, remembering to include all the important details.

Maintaining a Men Only model

The project is based on 'a men only model', with feedback suggesting that beneficiaries appreciate being in a male only group and say that they feel less pressure, more confident and more able to be themselves, with the addition of women changing that dynamic significantly.

Some beneficiaries that have female partners have at times expressed for them to be able to share the experiences of the project and have asked if they can be included, however we know that this changes the dynamics and can hamper the ability of men to make new connections with others, rather than depending on the security of attending with their wife or partner and for those without a partner, to feel intimidated by a partnership.

This is a challenging discussion to have but worth maintaining to ensure the aims and outcomes of the project. It may be worth organising additional celebratory or social events, such as a BBQ, that partners could be invited to that would not have an effect on the core project.

Understanding needs and accommodating individual issues, will encourage continued engagement and participation for beneficiaries and help to guide, influence and improve future events. Gaining feedback from the event, what has worked, what didn't work so well, ideas, experiences and opinions from the participants.

Volunteers

In the form of Mentors, Befrienders and ‘Buddies’, volunteers are invaluable to a project in providing peer support to those who need it the most and spreading the load of the project Lead as more beneficiaries take part. We know though feedback, that a buddy can increase the confidence and likelihood of participation and engagement in older men and are more likely to open up with someone in the same situation.

Volunteers, though, can be hard to find and should be trained and supported in the role and praised and rewarded for their service.



Feedback, Evaluation and Review

Gaining genuine and reliable feedback, evaluation and continual review of the project will allow for changes to be made to help to improve the project and ensure you are delivering the aims and meeting outcomes.

Gathering Feedback Event

Gathering feedback allows you to identify ways to learn and develop the project. It is of course important to gain useful feedback from the beneficiary themselves as the main beneficiary , but it is also valuable to hear what other stakeholders have to say about the difference the project has made, and here it is possible to look at their partners, volunteers and Carer Support workers.

Baseline Survey

Using an initial and relatively short survey can be hugely beneficial in gaining early understanding and in listening to the Carers ‘Voice’, right from the beginning, giving a good idea of their needs and what they want the project to look like. It can be conducted amongst carers in existing wellbeing groups or those interested in the project.

Once registered with the project, the CMF, a more involved questionnaire can be used to measure the participants journey throughout the project, measured at 6 monthly increments.

Event Feedback Forms

Are useful after each programmed event to gather evidence quickly at the time or shortly after and give a fairly accurate view of participants views and reactions.

At intermittent points throughout the project specific questionnaires and surveys can be used to gather information on specific outcomes, satisfaction, impact through a partners view point etc.

Although understanding the importance of their feedback, many of the beneficiaries make it clear that they do not enjoy completing written surveys, so it was important to make all surveys, questionnaires and feedback forms as short and user-friendly as possible and also find other ways to gather their feedback

This can be done through observations of behaviour and listening to and having informal conversations with participants. This probably produces the most genuine type of feedback, but is slightly harder to capture and evidence, though is possible through written reports.

Formal and Informal Interviews

With participants, volunteers or support workers, are a good way of gathering lots of feedback, but only if the interviewee is comfortable with this method. It gives them opportunity to talk about their experience of the project in detail, with your undivided attention. This is a particularly good way of informing a Case Study of a beneficiary, for example.

Photographs

‘a picture paints a thousand words’, or so they say, photographs, with consent, are a great way of capturing the experience of participants in the moment.



Using all the feedback information it should be possible to evaluate whether the project is performing successfully and making the difference it set out to.

Scrutinizing the quantitative data, monthly/ quarterly reporting on specific outputs like numbers of beneficiaries engaging with project, participation rates, timescales and budgets. Using a simple RAG rating system can quickly identify gaps or areas that are meeting or exceeding expectations.

Evaluating the more qualitative data, can be harder to assess, but can be done through monthly learning reports. These should look at the impact it has had on participants and wider community, unexpected or unintended, both positive and negative in consequence. How much and what kind of difference it has made, and what has happened as a result. Case studies, narratives and quotes are beneficial here.

Evaluating and reporting in this way will allow you to:

- Identify gaps in the project
- Look at what is working well
- What can be done better?

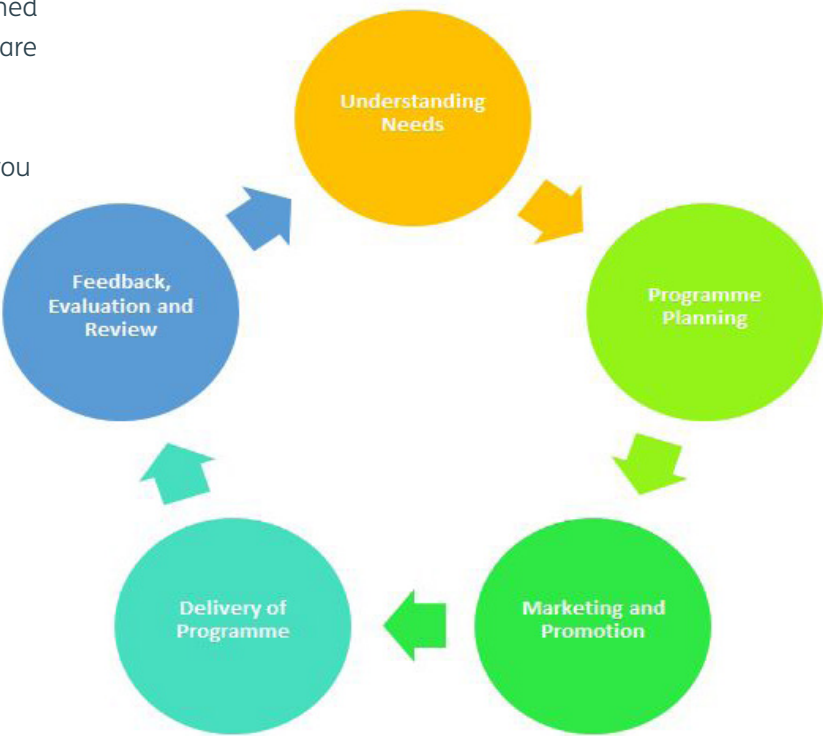


Use the review as an opportunity to look at the results of evaluations and feed it back into the project:

- Understanding the challenges and considering the learning opportunities.
- Making improvements or adjustments to the things that aren’t going well or act when problems develop, ensuring that you are delivering the quality and outcomes you set out to

And to:

- Communicate/celebrate the project to anyone and everyone.
- Plan for future projects



Case Studies



Nigel

Nigel* lost his wife, Sarah*, earlier this year after 62 years of marriage and now lives alone.

Men Do invited him onto the project, as a former carer and he first attended one of the Pie and Pint Events, where he met other beneficiaries and chatted happily, getting to know everyone. During the event, Norman shared that was concerned about his own safety, living alone.

The Project referred Nigel to Wellbeing Lincs, who visited him, offered a full assessment and organised a Telecare package, to help him feel safer, living alone.

Nigel called after the visit to say; he *“felt a lot safer, living alone, in his home and was grateful of the support from everyone.”*

He was also referred to Paul Hewlett at Carers First, for a benefits check, as he was unsure he was receiving all the benefits he was eligible for. Paul arranged a telephone consultation for Norman and advised him of all eligible benefits including Attendance Allowance and Pension Credit.

Nigel feels supported and is enjoying getting out and meeting new people with many Men Do activities, including a trip to International Bomber Command Centre and a private screening of Dam Busters at Kinema in the Woods and The Christmas Lunch at Skegness.

He has met many new friends as a result of the Men Do events and activities, but one friendship in particular has flourished with a gentleman called Jack*. Who is in a similar situation to him, and it was great to see them swapping contact details at the Christmas Meal and arranging to visit each other after the Christmas period.

Nigelsays of the Men Do Project, *“Carry on with the planning, I don’t get out too often, meeting friends, going to different places. I look forward to the next one....or two!”*

**Names have been changed to protect their identity*



Sam

Said he was in the depths of depression, struggling with excess weight and unwilling to engage with anyone or anything, before joining the Men Do Project. Sam* cares for his son, who has severe disabilities. His caring role is significant and very tiring, with early mornings and late nights and very little time for himself, making him feel overwhelmed at times, especially during school holidays, when he has less help.

Sam and his wife had planned a very different life to the one he has now, emigrating to France and building a dream home and business, however as their two children came along, they soon realised that their sons disabilities would mean they would need to be back in England to access the health care and support that he needed. Although Sam loves being with his son and does not like to complain, saying *‘I must keep going no matter what’*, he sometimes feels that this dream was unfairly taken away from him.

Sam says he enjoys caring for his son, however says due to his caring role, he can feel isolated and simply cannot enjoy a ‘normal life’ like other people of his age. For example, he spent his Christmas day, standing in the cold, on the corner of a street, watching and logging makes and colours of cars.

Realising he was very depressed and had gained weight, Sam accessed help from his GP and made a decision to access support from anywhere else he could, responding to the Men Do Project offer.

Sam says Men Do came just at the right time for him and really enjoys the project, saying it *“gives me a reason to get out”* attending the majority of its events and activities and he feels it has helped with his depression and given him a focus and something to look forward to, he feels less isolated and a valuable member of the group.

Sam is a natural leader with great ideas, keenness and compassionate encouragement for others within the group, he is always happy to volunteer to help and is open to contribute and take on more of a steering role of the project.

Sam says that as a direct result of this project he feels more supported and more self-confident and able to cope and take control of his health and wellbeing. It cannot take away his caring role, that ‘his life revolves around’ but gives him a short break from it and something that is just for him.

Tim

Tim* and his wife Jane* moved from Birmingham to the coast to retire and for a gentler pace of life in their later years.

Unfortunately, during this time Jane became ill and slowly over a period of time Tim became her main carer. The transition to carer was slow and steady and Tim didn't really notice that he was going out less and less and when he did go out, meeting with friends became more difficult and a bit embarrassing as they didn't always understand about Jane's illness.

Jane died suddenly in November 2018 and all of a sudden Tim was lost, he no longer had the caring role that took up most of his time, nor did he have a social life or close support from family that were still in Birmingham. Tim felt very much alone at a time where he really needed friendship and company.

His family visited from time to time and he spent some time grieving and coming to terms with the loss of Jane, but he was still very much alone and unable to see how to become socially active again.

Carers First (CF) supported Tim throughout his caring role, providing a Statutory Carers Assessment and all the support, information and advice he needed.

Tim received a letter in May 2019, inviting him to take part in the events and activities of the newly established Men Do Project. Misunderstanding its message, Tim contacted CF to say he had received the letter but couldn't possibly be eligible any longer, as his wife had passed away and he was no longer a carer.

The CSAC that took the call at the Hub, was supportive and asked Tim how he was feeling. Tim said he was feeling *"lonely"* and when he goes into town he never sees anyone he knows. The CSAC suggested joining a Carer Support Group and requested a regular 'Whats on Guide' to be posted out to him.

Tim attended the Wellbeing support Group at the Library in Mablethorpe, where he was able to chat and get to know other local carers and

where he also met the Project Lead for Men Do, who was able to explain a little bit more about the project and persuade him to come along to the first event 'Banter Breakfast'.

Tim attended the Mablethorpe 'Banter Breakfast' along with 13 other guys and quickly struck up a conversation with Steve – a fellow 'Brummie' and a fellow supporter of West Bromwich Albion Football Club.

Between June and December 2019 Tim attended 90% of Men Do events and activities, building close friendships with other carers and recently bereaved guys like himself. He said he wasn't always sure he would enjoy all the activities, but still wanted to go *"to see the others"*. Tim said he always felt a *"great sense of camaraderie"* amongst the participants. Over this period of time Tim began to see his confidence improve and was able to think more positively about the future.

Tim decided to put his house on the market and move closer to his son in Leighton Buzzard. His house sold quickly and he moved just before Christmas 2019. During the process of the sale Tim felt *"very sad to be leaving now, just as I have started to make some good friends"* and even questioning whether he was doing the right thing, as he has gained so much from the project.

Before he left, Tim proactively researched community groups and support available in Leighton Buzzard, something he certainly didn't feel able to do before the support of the Men Do Project.

The Men Do Project has been that small and bespoke crutch that Tim needed at that point in time, for him to re-gain the confidence to seek support, community engagement and friendship after losing himself completely within the caring role and now in the position of living alone as a former carer.

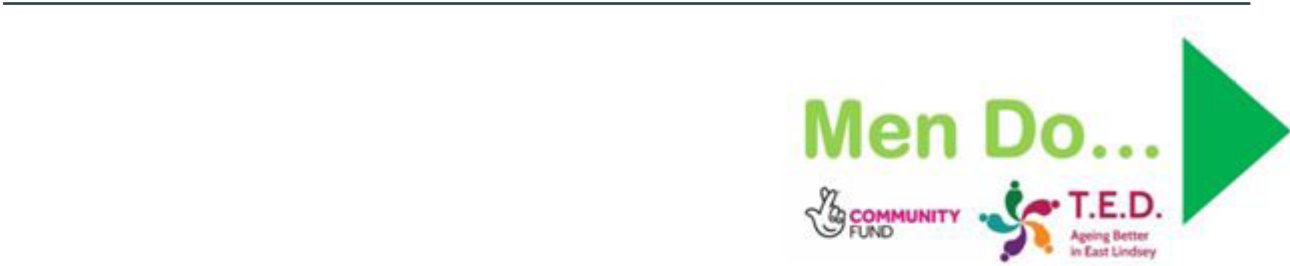
Tim remains in touch with the Men Do Project and the friends he has made, recently joining them on their trip in January 2020 to York Railway Museum, travelling separately from his new home in Leighton Buzzard, and meeting to a great reception at the Museum.



When beneficiaries were asked 'What impact has this project made on your life?'

One answered: "At first I would have answered in the neutral way, but now with the shutdown I realise how much I used to look forward to the get togethers (tend to take for granted somethings that you think will always be on hand – but when taken away what a hole is left in your life)"

Feedback Form



Men Do...Feedback

What have you enjoyed about this Event/Activity?

How do you feel after this Event/Activity?

What would you have been doing if you had not attended this Event/Activity?

What could have been improved on today?

Additional comments

Event To-Do List

	Completed	Notes
Event Name		
Event Date		
Event Venue		
Description of Event		
Event Specifications		
Attendance		
Venue Contact Name		
Venue Contact Number		
Venue Bookes		
Venue Cost		
Carering Required (details)		
Transport Required		
Transport Contact Name		
Transport Contact Number		
Transport Booked		
Transport Pick up Times/Places		
Transport Size		
Transport Cost		
Listed on BB		
Listed on Engagement Calendar		
Poster Created		
Poster Sent out via Email		
Letter Sent Out		
Email Reminder		
Text Reminder		
Pre-event Promotion (Press)		
Pre-event Promotion (Online)		
Post Event Promotion (Press)		
Post Event Promotion (Online)		
Event Paid		

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Men Do Events and Activity Programme 2020



August

5th Summer BBQ and Mini Beer Festival – 11-3pm
Legbourne Village Hall, Legbourne, Louth, LN11 8LW

13th Laser Clay Pigeon Shooting – 2 - 4pm
South Ormsby Estate, South Ormsby, Louth, LN11 8OS

September

9th Grimsby Fishing Heritage Museum (Transport Provided)
Pick up points: Alford Hunts Depot, Skegness Richmond Bus Station, Mablethorpe Seacroft Bus Station and Louth Queen St. Bus Station.
19th Comedy Night, Riverhead Theatre, Louth – 7pm
 Victoria Rd. Louth, LN11 0BX

October

10th BriSCA F1 Speed Weekend Stock Car Racing – 6pm
Marsh Lane, Orby, Skegness, PE24 5JA
31st Lincolnshire Aviation Heritage Centre,
Firework display and Night Taxy Run, inc. Hog
Roast (Transport Provided)
Pick up points: Alford Hunts Depot, Mablethorpe
Seacroft Bus Station, Louth Queen St. Bus Station and
Market Rasen.

November

11th Woodthorpe Driving Range inc. Bacon Butty – 10am
Woodthorpe Leisure Park, Woodthorpe, Nr Alford, LN13 0DD

18th Gents Afternoon Tea – 12 - 3pm
Legbourne Village Hall, Legbourne, Louth, LN11 8LW

December

9th Christmas Party Surprise (TBC)

The Men Do is a **Men Only** Project, you must be over 50 and live in East Lindsey. The Project is all about giving you the chance to get out and have fun doing something you're interested in for FREE. For more information and to book your FREE place call: 0300 303 1555 or Sarah on: 07391 418586 or online: info@CarersFIRST.org.uk



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www.communitylincs.com

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Email: info@ageuklindsey.co.uk

www.ageuk.org.uk/lindsey

Telephone: 01522 782224

Email: hello@carersfirst.org.uk

www.carersfirst.org.uk/lincolnshire

Telephone: 0808 278 7904

www.citizensadvice.org.uk

Email: lincsdigital@outlook.com

Magna Vitae (Meridian Leisure Centre)

Telephone: 01527 607650

Email: info@mvtlc.org

www.magnavitae.org

www.dementiafriends.org.uk

www.who.int

www.who.int

www.ageing-better.org.uk

www.sensorytrust.org.uk/information

www.sensorytrust.org.uk/information

www.bitc.org.uk/what-responsible-business

www.bitc.org.uk/what-responsible-business

www.designcouncil.org.uk/resources

www.actionhearingloss.org.uk/how-we-help



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YMCA enables people to develop their full potential in mind, body and spirit. Inspired by, and faithful to, our Christian values, we create supportive, inclusive and energising communities, where young people can truly belong, contribute and thrive.

SUPPORT & ADVICE

ACCOMMODATION

FAMILY WORK

HEALTH & WELLBEING

TRAINING & EDUCATION