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## Stronger together: Ageing Well Torbay share how working in collaboration during times of crisis has incredible results

Ageing Well Torbay, led by the Torbay Community Development Trust, has taken a lead role in pooling together COVID-19 resource across Torbay, heading up a 7 days a week/12 hour a day Community Coronavirus Helpline.

This week's "co-producing in a crisis" blog highlights how **Ageing Well Torbay** recognised very early on that they were well placed to lead the COVID-19 response in their communities, along with other key organisations across the Bay...

On March 16<sup>th</sup>, the **Torbay Community Coronavirus Helpline** was established and the Devon based Ageing Better programme got to work with TCDT teams to respond to the support needs of individuals and families facing lockdown, ensuring that people were connected during this time of crisis and continue to be so.

**David Gledhill** (Marketing & Communications Lead), shares how the team have been pooling resources with local organisations and volunteers, to support the most vulnerable at a time when people are suddenly reliant on friends, neighbours and the TCC helpline for the things we take for granted; not just food and medicines but also the company of others.

### Over to you David:

How did Ageing Well Torbay respond?

*"Individuals and services needed to work together in an unprecedented way, ensuring that any support gaps could be filled quickly and that we could complement our skills and specialisms to deliver the very best of the expertise that's available in the local charity and voluntary sector."*



# LOOKING AFTER ALL OUR TOMORROWS TODAY

*The immediate reaction was overwhelming. The phones started ringing, and for several weeks it just hasn't stopped. One day our teams took around 400 calls."*

*"We have pooled resources with Brixham Does Care, Age UK Torbay, Healthwatch Torbay and the Citizens Advice Bureau in Torbay to cover all bases – we needed to be able to keep abreast of the latest guidance coming out of the Government and the NHS and we needed to make sure we were looking after vulnerable people in our communities.*

*It is no wonder, that nationally a new hashtag **#nevermoreneeded** has been coined to ensure that the work of our sector can be recognised."*

David also explains how Ageing Well Torbay & TCDT are busy working alongside the NHS and Torbay Council, as part of a coalition of 15 organisations and foodbanks known as the **Torbay Food Alliance** to make sure that no-one goes hungry during the crisis.

**How are you ensuring that communities work together to enable older people to stay connected?**

*In order to sustain the central work of Ageing Better, which is to connect older people within our communities, reducing isolation and minimising loneliness, we have tapped into the very best of **#TorbayKind** and connected with hundreds of volunteers who are now helping and watching out for their older neighbours.*

*Matching offers of help with those needing support, our teams will keep this initiative going for the foreseeable future, hoping that as a result of this situation new friendships and connections will flourish.*

*Staff and volunteers are still out on the frontline as a first response, however our well-established team of **Community Builders** are now turning their attention to supporting more than 50 local areas through the **Good Neighbours** initiative, which enables volunteers to organise themselves in to groups of peer-led support.*



Ageing Well Torbay is also playing a key part within **The Torbay Help Hub** which was initially started on Facebook by a small group of local people, soon becoming “a mightily large community of volunteers”. The hub is available for anyone in the local community wanting to sign up, and provides general advice for all, along with ideas of what to do during lockdown.

### **What next?**

*The team are reflecting on the tentative debate about when doors will begin to open again and when we might start to venture back to our places of work, but for the most vulnerable we know that the end is not yet in sight and is unlikely to be for some considerable time. Ageing Well Torbay will remain central to the support needs that are stemming from this crisis.*

Thank you so much to the TCDT and Ageing Well Torbay for highlighting all the different ways in which we can collaborate within our communities, especially when it's needed the most.

We look forward to sharing more from Torbay's community alliances, as part of the national co-production project, diving deeper in to learning on their “Community Builders” network, an inspirational multi-dimensional model of co-production in action.

**Next week we welcome back BAB, (Bristol Ageing Better) who share specifically how they are managing to keep co-production central to their work during this time of uncertainty.**

**Co-written by Vicky O'Donoghue, (Co-production Project Lead) in collaboration with David Gledhill (Marketing & Communications Lead), on behalf of the Ageing Well Torbay Team.**

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## Age Better in Sheffield

Age Better in Sheffield was set up in 2015 with funding from the National Lottery Community Fund with a remit to reduce loneliness and social isolation amongst people aged over 50 in Sheffield. In the 7th year of the programme, we are taking the learning, resources, partnerships and projects forward with a renewed focus and passion towards building an Age-friendly Sheffield.

## What we do

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