

Growing Older Active Lives: GOAL South Lancashire: Outcomes and Engagement

Lancashire County Council, the new Central Lancashire Primary Care Trust and other local partners undertook a Partnership for Older People's Project bid in 2006. The project is noted in the recent Inter Agency Group paper "working together for well-being from vision to reality" and was the subject of a popular workshop session at the SSRG annual workshop. Below, Steve Korta and colleagues summarise the project and highlight aspects of the project for general learning.

The Project

GOAL aimed to convert a successful "medicines management pilot" within four residential homes into a scheme that could extend to the whole community. The pilot demonstrated that when working with the whole person i.e. understanding the role of medication whilst focussing at the same time upon diet, stimulation, physical activity, routine, self image and the general wellbeing of residents in tandem with care givers and families' dramatic reductions in both primary and secondary health care could be achieved. At the

same time the functional abilities and quality of life of residents also improved. Within one home for example over time no residents required any form of night time sedation and the incidence of falls, fractures and GP call outs were all reduced noticeably. The challenge was to implement the thinking and approach developed in specific settings across an entire community.

Engagement

Recent investment in developing a Lancashire Strategy for an Aging Population, the formation of local Partnership Boards and the development of local older people's forums in the community all paid dividends. As a result the project was able to call upon older adults with specialist knowledge in medicines, those who had a lifetime of experienced

of working across health and social care, those who represented carers and diverse groups and one U3A group who represented 1400 members. This combined knowledge enriched and enhanced the project.

To produce a bid over a short time frame the role of "Service Design Groups" was developed. Each group met separately focussing upon one area of the project: Medicines Management, Community Support and Outreach Support. The Groups had an equal representation of officers to older adults.

Clearly many authorities are working hard to develop effective ways of working with service users. GOAL highlighted however how much more investment is required when moving from "consultation", at times a one-way process, to "engagement" a continuing and ongoing process. Effective engagement required that at each stage of development all those involved in the project, including older adults, participated and therefore



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