



Walk with me

Time to Shine end of project report
2017



Summary

The Feel Good Factor's Walk with Me project linked volunteers (16+) to older people to provide support and encouragement to get out of the house. Individual volunteers were linked to an individual older person and together they worked to achieve the older person's goals and aspirations which included walking to see friends, attending church or going to the local shop. The main target of this project were older people limited to their own home environment, as a result of ill health or disability. The project also had a BME focus and worked on a ward level in the Chapel Allerton ward (Chapelton, Scott Hall, Meanwood and Chapel Allerton).

Walk with me in numbers

- 15 Volunteers delivered 756 hours of volunteering
- 18 older people benefitted
- 50% of participants were from BME communities



What was planned and what happened?

Originally envisioned as an intergenerational project, the challenge of recruiting younger volunteers who were prepared to commit to the length of time required to engage with the older person was not achievable. Feel Good Factor decided to work collaboratively with Age UK Leeds's Walking with Confidence project on recruiting, training and matching volunteers to older people.

The project worker said:

“We were targeting young people, that was what the project was. I found it so difficult...some needed lots of support, we weren't getting students coming forward, as they were too busy... I was getting enquiries from active retired people, I asked [the programme team], if I could recruit older people, [they] said yes, that changed the project.”

The Time to Shine Team worked with them to develop an action plan. As a result, they turned the project round, achieving some excellent results for socially isolated older people living in Chapel Allerton.



What difference did it make for older people?

- All participants who completed evaluation forms reported more contact with people in their local neighbourhood.
- Older people accessed social and exercise activities organised by Feel Good Factor, Black Health Initiative, Zest Health for Life, Moortown Baptist Church, the Polish Centre and both the Laughter Club and St Martin's Practice Holy Trinity Church in Meanwood.
- Of the clients remaining at the end of the project six moved on to the new Healthy Lives and Homes Project
- 3 Older people also formed friendships with volunteers beyond the 12-weekly intervention with some continuing to meet up for a walk 12 months later.
- Several older people with disabilities have managed to do things they never thought they would be able to do: a partially sighted man is now getting out and about; a woman is attending an exercise class and using the Access Bus after 4 years of not leaving her home; a man in a care home is getting out using a mobility scooter; a man with dementia get the Access bus to a luncheon club and a local social group

Learning

One-to-one volunteer roles require a specific skillset, and a commitment to regular volunteering that is less likely to attract a younger person. They are more likely to be attracted to volunteer for one off events

- Delivering a service that is reliant upon volunteers requires realistic set up time and targets
- Attracting male volunteers to match to male clients can be challenging
- Making the right volunteer/client match is key to the success
- Lack of mobility is a barrier to getting out, particularly if older people do not have access to a car or can't afford taxis
- Social isolation is complex: older people stop getting out so further lose confidence to get out; they may be reluctant to admit to being, or may not identify as being, socially isolated.



Legacy and sustainable partnerships

- Walk with Me set up comprehensive volunteering policies, procedures and the infrastructure for Feel Good Factor.
- Feel Good Factor have increased their volunteer base and all the active volunteers have been found roles in the new Healthy Lives and Homes project.
- Continued support for the Laughter Club in Meanwood.
- The profile of Feel Good Factor has been raised and they have worked with organisations that they have never worked with before, in particular in Meanwood.
- New partners and new clients have been introduced to Feel Good Factor.
- Conversely Feel Good Factor introduced new clients to other organisations.

“I have met some lovely people and made lots of friends.”



A Feel Good Factor Story

An 87 year old woman was referred to the project by her GP. She was feeling low in mood and lonely. She had been caring for her husband for 7 years after he had a bad stroke and was bedridden; he had recently passed away after 62 years of marriage. She said she had lost confidence and couldn't even remember what she liked doing having not really been anywhere for 7 years.

She was matched to a volunteer who introduced her to 3 new social groups, one being the Laughter Club. She now attends these groups weekly and has quickly made friends. The GP reported back saying: 'this lady really has changed and is doing so well and looks 10 years younger!'



Resources

[Working with individuals with anxiety](#) (Time to Shine 2019)

To find out more about Feel Good Factor go to fgfleeds.org

To find out more about Time to Shine go to www.timetoshineleeds.org



Leeds Older People's Forum
Joseph's Well, Suite C24
Leeds
LS3 1AB
0113 2441697

 tts@opforum.org.uk

 timetoshineleeds.org

 [@TTSLeeds](https://twitter.com/TTSLeeds)

 facebook.com/timetoshineleeds

Leeds Older People's Forum Charity 1191030

