



Time to Shine Programme Evaluation: Summary of beneficiary outcomes

1. What is Time to Shine (TTS)?



Run by Leeds Older People's Forum (LOPF) Time to Shine (TTS) aims to reduce social isolation and loneliness amongst older people in Leeds. Third sector organisations across Leeds are commissioned to deliver a range of projects, locally and citywide, to help people make social connections. TTS is part of the Ageing Better programme, a £78 million investment by the Big Lottery Fund, covering 14 areas in England.

The programme offers a range of support and is ever evolving, with some projects running a range of initiatives for particular communities, whilst others offer specific activities, such as: events and trips (e.g. restaurants, pubs, stately homes, the seaside); physical exercise (such as walking); arts and craft; making food; singing, dancing, storytelling; hosting visiting speakers; or just simply meeting to have a drink and a chat.

2. How has TTS been evaluated?



The evidence is based on:

- A before and after questionnaire of 179 older people who have been using TTS services
- Information provided by 626 older people who completed a before questionnaire only
- Five focus groups with older people
- Interviews with eight older people
- Five case studies of specific TTS projects
- Interviews with 14 stakeholders, including 11 delivery partners across nine projects
- Half of the stakeholders were interviewed twice

3. Who has Time to Shine reached?



So far over 5,600 people of all ages have been involved in TTS in some way including:

- Over 2,600 older people participating regularly in projects
- Almost 500 older people involved in one-off activities or events
- 335 older volunteers and 140 volunteers aged 49 or under helping to plan, deliver or steer delivery partner projects
- 11 peer researchers trained to support the local evaluation
- Over 1,000 indirect beneficiaries reached through communications, publicity and social media

4. How is Time to Shine contributing to reduced loneliness and social isolation?

Overall people feel less lonely and more socially connected

All one to one interviewees felt that by participating in TTS their social contact had increased and they were less lonely.

The individual projects provided opportunities to meet new people, with examples of friendships developing outside of the activities run:

“I have more friends and connections; it has made a big difference.”

The results of one loneliness scale used in the questionnaire showed similar findings, with older people less likely to feel lonely either some of the time or often, following their involvement in TTS. However, the results of a different loneliness scale showed no difference, except for those who live with someone else. This may be because the two scales identify different types of loneliness, as other studies have found.

TTS can help at times when people feel particularly lonely

Some of the interviewees said that TTS gave them something to do at the weekend. This is important as evenings, weekends and bank holidays are often times when older people feel particularly lonely.

People are better connected and feel more involved

Older people involved in TTS are more likely to be those who are lonely than those who

are socially isolated, with many of those completing the questionnaire before their involvement in TTS having some social contact with family or friends at least weekly. But as people engage with TTS their levels of social contact increase, with 69 per cent reporting either the same, or increased levels. Being involved in TTS is also helping some people to feel more involved in their community, with 78 per cent of questionnaire respondents recording the same, or an improved perception of involvement compared to others of the same age:

“I have lived in the same village for 40 years, I knew nobody, everything I did was outside of my village, but now I am a complete part of the community...It [the project] opened the door and let me into the village, it makes me feel welcome.”

Older people valued the specifically targeted activities

Many projects are aimed at particular groups of older people, for example: those with physical, mental and cognitive impairments; men; carers; LGBT; and ethnic minority communities. Interviewees who identified as one of these groups valued activities which were targeted toward their needs, and for some, this contributed toward increased confidence and a willingness to participate.

5. How is Time to Shine contributing to increased well-being, life satisfaction and activity levels?

Overall wellbeing has improved

A scale was used in the questionnaire to measure any change in mental well-being and showed that over half the respondents reported higher levels of well-being after their involvement in TTS. Interview and focus group participants reported experiencing improved mood and reduced depression:

“Getting involved has got rid of my depression, my family live far away and I started to become very tearful, but since joining the project I have made lots of friends and I feel happier.”

People also mentioned being part of more meaningful social networks which led to greater wellbeing:

“Life has meaning now. There is more to life than just waking up and going about routine things, I feel as if I am sharing my life.”

People are more satisfied with life

Over 40 per cent of the questionnaire respondents reported an improvement in their overall satisfaction with life. On a scale of 0-10 where 0 is extremely dissatisfied and 10 is extremely satisfied, the average score rose from 8.1 to 8.7.

Confidence levels have grown

Some interviewees stated that they had gained new skills and greater confidence through participating in TTS:

“I wouldn't have gone for a meal on my own, I might have gone to a café, but a pub or restaurant, I wouldn't do that on my own...now I have been a couple of times [to the TTS intervention] I would go to a restaurant or pub on my own, I wouldn't dream of doing it alone before.”

Physical activity has increased

Older people who completed a questionnaire were fairly active before getting involved in TTS, with over three quarters carrying out more than 60 minutes of physical activity in a week. However TTS appeared to improve physical activity levels even further, with the proportion of those achieving the Government Chief Medical Officer's recommendation of 150 minutes of physical activity a week rising from 57.3 to 63.6 per cent.

6. How are older people contributing to the design, delivery and evaluation of Time to Shine?

Older people are playing a key role in Time To Shine

Older people play a central role in the design, delivery and evaluation of TTS, through volunteering as befrienders, being members of steering groups, assisting with marketing, hosting events and helping with the local evaluation. One older person referred to being enabled to contribute to delivery of the project she was involved with, through chairing a meeting, despite having a physical disability:

“I like that about [the project], they use people in different ways, they support people to contribute.”

Volunteering gives a sense of purpose

All volunteers, who were asked, said that they valued their role and found it satisfying, with many feeling they got more out of it than they put in. They said that it was particularly valuable when experiencing 'life transitions' such as retirement or bereavement and it gave their life a renewed sense of purpose:

“When you retire you need a focus, you need to feel needed, if you have worked with a lot of people, teamwork, you have to feel needed or part of something as this is good for wellbeing.”

Involving older people requires adequate resourcing

Unsurprisingly, the interviews found that volunteers require support, which varies according to the individual, the task they are carrying out, and the organisation they are volunteering with. This, of course, has resource implications for organisations delivering activities.



7. How the Impact of Time to Shine can be strengthened



Widening engagement even further

Although TTS has succeeded in reaching a wide range of older people, there is still more work to do in this respect.

The programme needs to: reach more of those who are the most isolated and have few social contacts; continue to provide targeted activities that are tailored to the diverse cultural needs of older people, including the African Caribbean community; and encourage more smaller, grass roots, organisations to get involved in delivery.

Deepening the impact

To deepen the impact of the TTS activities even further, more activities could be offered at evenings and weekends, when people are more at risk of loneliness, and people should be encouraged and supported to foster friendships outside of the TTS activities.

Encourage even more co-design and delivery

TTS has been effective in encouraging older people to co-produce the programme but even more can be done to ensure co-design and delivery of services is happening across the projects.

Links to other reports and further information:

Alden, S and Wigfield, A. 2016, Time to Shine Evaluation Interim Report: The Beneficiary Experience, www.sheffield.ac.uk/polopoly_fs/1.667374!/file/TtoS.full.report.pdf

Wigfield, A and Alden, S. 2017 Evaluation of Time to Shine: Year 2: Interim Findings www.sheffield.ac.uk/polopoly_fs/1.750658!/file/Time-to-Shine-Final-Report.pdf