



Report 7 TIME TO SHINE LOCAL EVALUATION

THE IMPACTS OF TIME TO SHINE ON PROJECT BENEFICIARIES

Produced for Leeds Older People's Forum

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A quick guide to the language used at Time to Shine

Ageing Better (AB)

The National Lottery Community Fund's national grant programme which funds Time to Shine until 2022. The full title of the programme is 'Fulfilling Lives: Ageing Better'. 14 'Ageing Better' programmes were funded in England, including TTS in Leeds.

Beneficiary

An overarching term for individuals who engaged with a Time to Shine project on at least one occasion.

Delivery partner

An organisation commissioned to deliver activities or services as part of TTS. Delivery partners were commissioned by Leeds Older People's Forum (LOPF).

Participant

A beneficiary aged 50+ who has engaged on three or more occasions with a TTS delivery partner project (for example joining in activities or receiving services).

Quarterly monitoring

A quarterly cycle used to collect qualitative and quantitative data from Delivery Partners to chart progress towards the Time to Shine targets and so that learning and case studies were captured regularly throughout the programme. Partner payments were only released when satisfactory monitoring returns were received.

Test and Learn questions

A set of questions created by members of the TTS team and Core Partnership to articulate what they would like to learn through the programme.

TTS outcomes

A list of 4 strategic outcomes that TTS worked towards. These are:

- 1 - Beneficiaries report that they are less isolated as a result of a programme intervention.
- 2 - Programme beneficiaries feel confident and able to participate in their communities
- 3 - Older people have been actively involved in managing, designing, delivering and evaluating the programme
- 4 - Our wider partnership will expand each year and will work better together to coordinate services and support for isolated older people.

Common Measurement Framework (CMF) evaluation questionnaire

The way in which the AB programme overall and TTS gathered information from older people involved in Delivery Partner projects.

Volunteer

A person who engaged on three or more occasions with a TTS project to give up their time to support any type of TTS activity. For monitoring purposes volunteers were categorised as either aged 50+ or younger.

The Time to Shine (TTS) programme, led by Leeds Older People's Forum (LOPF), aimed to reduce isolation and loneliness for older people (50+) living in Leeds between 2015-2021¹. TTS was funded by the National Lottery Community Fund as part of the Fulfilling Lives: Ageing Better programme (AB)², which invested £80 million across 14 local authorities in England to reduce loneliness for older people and share good practice. The TTS programme worked in partnership with local organisations to commission, design, deliver and evaluate a range of activities, including campaigns and specific interventions³. As part of the TTS programme a suite of ten evaluation reports have been published by the evaluation team at the Centre for Loneliness Studies based in the University of Sheffield⁴. An overview of the ten reports is presented in **Report 1 TTS Evaluation Executive Summary**. This report is **Report 7** in this suite of reports.

The four main objectives of the Time to Shine programme were used to design the evaluation:

1. Each year beneficiaries report that they are less isolated as a result of a project intervention
2. Project beneficiaries feel confident and able to participate in their communities by 2021
3. Older people have been actively involved in managing, designing, delivering and evaluating the project
4. The wider partnership will expand each year and will work better together to coordinate services and support for isolated older people

There is very little evidence of what works when tackling loneliness and social isolation⁵. Consequently, one of the objectives of TTS was to generate new knowledge about what works so that evidence-informed approaches can be applied by TTS and others in the future.

¹ As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic the TTS programme continued to operate beyond the original funded period; however, the evaluation reports were prepared at the end of the initial funded period in 2021.

² For more details see <https://www.ageing-better.org.uk/blogs/ageing-better-big-lottery-fund-story-so-far>

³ Details of all TTS projects can be found at www.opforum.org.uk/projects-and-campaigns/time-to-shine/time-to-shine-projects

⁴ For more details see <https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/socstudies/research/centres-and-networks/centre-loneliness-studies>

⁵ Courtin, E., & Knapp, M. (2017). Social isolation, loneliness and health in old age: a scoping review. *Health & social care in the community*, 25(3), 799-812.

1.1. Scope of this report

This report seeks to contribute to the generation of new knowledge and to assess whether TTS was successful in meeting its programme objectives. This report uses the findings obtained through analysis of 31 individual interviews and 13 focus groups with TTS beneficiaries to explore the broader impacts of TTS on beneficiaries and to complement the findings from the Common Measurement Framework (CMF) questionnaire data represented in **Report 6: Participation, engagement and outcomes for older people**. Specifically, this report aims to answer the following question:

- **What were the broader impacts for beneficiaries of participating in TTS?**

1.2. Evaluation methods

A comprehensive account of the research methods used across the ten evaluation reports can be found in **Report 2: TTS Evaluation Methods**. The findings of the beneficiary interviews and focus groups, as with the CMF evaluation questionnaire, might not fully represent all TTS beneficiaries or TTS funded projects. This is because there were differences between projects as to how many beneficiaries participated in the interviews or focus groups. Furthermore, those involved in the interviews and focus groups are not necessarily the same as those represented in the respondents to the CMF evaluation questionnaire.

In total 87 older adults were involved either in interviews (n = 31) or focus groups (n = 56). The details that were available of the interviewees and focus group attendees are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Details of the TTS interviewees, focus group attendees and focus groups*

Details of interviewees, focus group attendees and focus groups		Total of 87
Status	Beneficiary	41
	Volunteer	24
Age	50-59	8
	60-69	14
	70-79	4
	80-89	4
	90+	1
Gender	Women	45
Living arrangement	Lives alone	13
	Lives with others	9
Sexuality	Heterosexual	12
	LGBTQ+	1
Ethnicity	White British	16
	Other	1
Focus group number attendees	Range	2-9
	Average	4

****This table reflects data where it is available. It was not possible to obtain details of all attendees at all focus groups***

Of the beneficiaries who were interviewees or focus group attendees, many were known to be project volunteers (**Table 1**). The term volunteer was used by the different TTS Delivery Partners in a formal or informal capacity. As such it is important to consider that the experience of volunteers may have been qualitatively different to those who participated as beneficiaries and not as a volunteer. To aid in understanding these differing experiences those interviewees or attendees who were known to be classed as a volunteer, are identified as such when their responses have been quoted in this report.

To support understanding of this report please refer to the quick guide to understanding quotations on page 3 of **Report 2**.

The findings from the interviews and focus groups demonstrate that there were broad impacts of TTS on beneficiaries. Broadly these were increased community connections and belonging, benefits to physical and mental health, an improved sense of self and positive personal changes and growth. These impacts related to several of the overall TTS programme objectives, in particular that older people would be less isolated and more actively engaged in and valued by their communities. Overall, the findings presented in this report demonstrate that TTS had broad benefits for beneficiaries and a positive impact on individual wellbeing and the broader community. The impacts reported here demonstrate that the beneficiary experiences met the original TTS programme objectives.

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Findings from the beneficiary interviews and focus groups

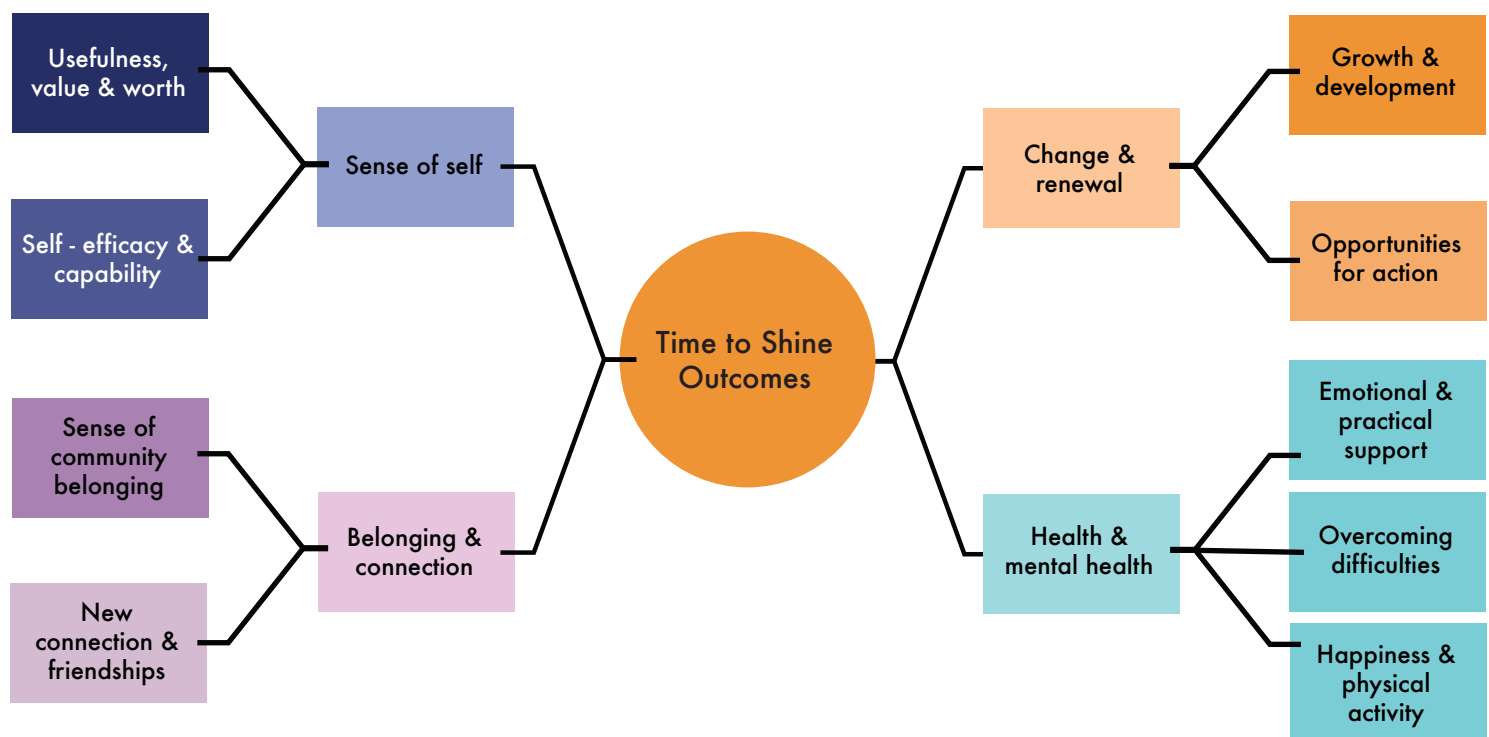
What were the broader impacts for beneficiaries of participating in TTS?

Following the thematic analysis of the interview and focus group transcripts four overarching themes were identified:

- sense of self
- belonging and connection
- change and renewal
- physical and mental health

These themes and the sub-themes that stem from them are represented in the thematic framework presented in **Figure 1**. Each of these themes and sub-themes are now further considered and supported by beneficiary and volunteer quotations.

Figure 1. Thematic Framework of impacts of TTS on beneficiaries



2.1. Sense of self

Beneficiaries and volunteers who participated in the interviews and focus groups spoke of experiencing beneficial changes to their sense of self in two main ways: they gained a greater sense of their own **self-efficacy and capability** and they felt that in the eyes of others they had enhanced **usefulness, value and worth**. Their self-efficacy and capability were discussed with regards to **greater confidence and self-esteem, having a renewed identity and greater autonomy**. These changes to their sense of self were related to feeling able to participate within the TTS projects and in their wider community.

“I’ve been doing lots of courses with [Names Time to Shine project]... I definitely feel I’ve got more confidence, like for instance, I would never ever have talked in front of a lot of people before, which is something I feel I can do now.”

Sally, Female, Volunteer, Focus Group 18

"[I've gained] Confidence, because I would never ever have been able to talk in front of more than a couple of people, but now you can't shut me up basically. It's given me a lot of confidence, I've met lots of different people, lots of skills, art work, sewing and continuing to do that."

Rita, Female, Beneficiary, Focus Group 17

Beneficiaries and volunteers also spoke of feeling useful and with purpose, and that others made them feel valued and respected. This was particularly experienced by those focus group attendees and beneficiaries that identified as volunteers.

" I think it's really made me feel alive, passing on my knowledge and skills. Not just to the older end who've not done anything like this before, but the younger end as well. I had a course yesterday [with a group of young people], teaching them basic [names practical skill]. It made me feel really useful."

Victor, Male, Volunteer, Focus Group 20

"Being able to get out there and support people is the best thing, otherwise you are stuck at home doing nothing."

Miraya, Female, Volunteer, Focus Group 18

"It just makes you think about what else you want to do. It gives you a sense of purpose and a goal. Thinking about what else you want to do out there - you don't just want to stop at that, think of other things, and then if an opportunity comes up, that you might have said no to, you might take it up."

Chakir, Male, Volunteer, Focus Group 16

"The best thing of all, is that when I went to the jobcentre and I saw the [names project] poster...it saved me. It made me feel like I was doing something good... Having that kind of thing available is tremendous. Really tremendous. Really positive and it helps people."

Phil, Male, Age 60-69, Beneficiary, Lives Alone, Heterosexual, Interviewee

The beneficiaries and volunteers who were interviewed spoke about the enhanced **sense of community belonging** they had experienced as a result of participation in the Time to Shine projects. **Belongingness** is a fundamental need to feel as though we belong to a particular group or place, and it can be considered as the opposite to experiences of social isolation. This theme relates to one of the TTS programme objectives, that older people would feel less isolated.

“I don’t think I’ll ever stop. Once I get involved in something I seem to become part of it...You don’t suddenly let go when you’ve become part of a community”

Mina, Female, Volunteer, Focus Group 15

“It was a saviour for me, I now consider all the lads in this building as family at this stage, we’ve become really tight together and we work very well together.”

Kevin, Male, Beneficiary, Focus Group 20

“What we say in our group is that we feel like a big family. Everyone’s isolated and lonely, but when they come to the group they feel connected, and I feel the same.”

Chakir, Male, Volunteer, Focus Group 16

“I think it’s just been enjoying being part of a group. It’s like a sense of belonging, isn’t it? A sense of belonging to that group of people who were all very - everybody’s very friendly and it’s just nice to be a part of it. To be recognised as well, you know. Like if I’m out locally I might see someone - oh, I think I’ve seen you in - did you go to so and so, I think I saw you, oh, yes that was me.”

Chakir, Male, Volunteer, Focus Group 16

The beneficiaries also spoke of a range of ways in which they had formed **new connections and friendships** as a result of participating in the Time to Shine projects. These were **connections with neighbours or those in the community, and with new groups and new people**. This sense of connection was felt from simple experiences like **recognising more faces in their neighbourhood**, to more complex experiences like **forming new friendships and relationships**.

“So it’s exactly what Time To Shine has brought to me. I can’t walk through the city without seeing people who know me now, through different areas and it all stemmed from [names Time to Shine project].”

Kevin, Male, Beneficiary, Focus Group 20

“I think it’s nice to speak to people who have been to similar activities and they’re outside your family and friends and it’s people you just meet. You could have more contact with them later or not, you could walk away but it makes you go home and you feel much better don’t you?”

Judy, Female, Volunteer, Focus Group 18

“You do meet very interesting people. Everybody has a different story to tell. You get to know them and you become friends.”

Chakir, Male, Volunteer, Focus Group 16

“I would never have met all these people. Well, without a doubt I wouldn’t because how would you meet these people in other circumstances?...But what it’s [participating in Time to Shine] done, is enabled me not just to sort of mix with people, but mix with people that I lived close by [to]. So, for example, when the lockdown was eased and we were allowed to go sit outside a pub and have a lunch, some of us ladies from the group went and did that because we lived within a stone’s throw of each other really. But we didn’t know that before the Time to Shine.”

Laura, Female, Age 60-69, Beneficiary, Lives With Partner, Interviewee

The beneficiaries who were interviewed spoke of the **growth and development** that had occurred as a result of participating in the Time to Shine projects. This growth and development was for some simply the benefits from **trying something new**, for others it extended to **learning new skills**, and for others it was seen as a **springboard for something else** such as a new job or career. The role of volunteer may have been particularly influential for older adults to experience this sense of change and renewal.

“Doing the [name of project] for me was to retrain to learn new skills so that I could again carry on doing teaching. Funnily enough, that has been really great.”

Phil, Male, Age 60-69, Beneficiary, Lives Alone, Heterosexual, Interviewee

“If you’re looking for work, it’s helpful to have on your CV as well. It’s better than applying for a job when you’ve done nothing.”

Andrew, Male, Volunteer, Focus Group 16

“It’s really fulfilling. You get a good sense of achievement. I found that when I had depression, I suffered from long standing depression, that made things worse, the fact I was doing nothing, not going anywhere, seeing nobody, but volunteering turned that around. You go out and meet people, and when you are ready, you can start helping people who were where you were. That’s a really good feeling; feeling that when you go home, you’ve done something useful with your time.”

Violet, Female, Volunteer, Focus Group 16

There were benefits for those interviewed from participation in the Time to Shine projects in that they were offered **opportunities for action**. These opportunities were to **take part in activities, talk to others or leave the house**. Taking these opportunities for action reflect significant changes for many adults and older adults who may have previously been living in such a way that leaving the house and engaging with something new may have felt a considerable challenge.

“I tend to not go out. So going to [names Time to Shine project], meeting people there and talking, and doing things like this are what get me out the door. Going to [names Time to Shine project] and coming to things like this are not normal behaviour for me, I would tend to be at home, either in front of the computer or avoiding the world in one other form or another. So it’s actually been quite good. I’ve socialised more.”

Stan, Male, Beneficiary, Focus Group 15

“I wouldn’t drive off to the countryside to walk on my own, and I certainly don’t feel safe walking round here...I know the walks have been checked out [by the project workers] for slippery bits and things. A group of us often arrive earlier, like half an hour, people arrive earlier because they can make their own tea and coffee when they get there and sit and have a chat.”

Wendy, Female, Age 50-59, Beneficiary, Lives Alone, LGBTQ+. Interviewee

“Joining something like [names project] for me... by the time I’d looked after [partners name] 24-7, and when [they] died, what do you do? But once I started coming here, well you’ve got to get up and get on because you’ve got to get here for 9.30 or else you can’t get the car parked and people will be waiting...and it gives you some incentive. There’s somebody expecting you and people to talk to and that gets you out.”

Emily, Female, Beneficiary, Focus Group 14

Those beneficiaries who were interviewed experienced benefits to their physical and mental health, with many experiencing particular benefits to their perceived **wellbeing**. The experiences discussed relating to wellbeing included **physical activity** and positive emotional experiences such as **joy** and **happiness**.

“...I think it works, it makes a difference to people, not just me, but other people as well, and it is so simple...getting together and making something together. Going on a walk together, having shared experiences together, it is really connecting, and a couple of years ago when I started there, and one of my evaluation forms I said, it got me up and dressed on a Monday, so that is pretty good.”

Wendy, Female, Age 50-59, Beneficiary, Lives Alone, LGBTQ+, Interviewee

“Most of them [at the event] were in the 70s and 80s and I thought oh god I feel a bit uncomfortable here, but do you know, I had a right laugh, some of them elderly ladies are so funny. I actually did enjoy myself.”

Rose, Female, Age 50-59, Beneficiary, Lives Alone, Interviewee

“It’s made a big difference to me and I look forward to every Wednesday”

“Same with me, it gets me out the house. I’ve got [names illness] and it’s got me out the house and I’ve met all these lovely people

Focus Group, two attendees (no details)

There were other benefits for beneficiary physical and mental health in that participation in Time to Shine had helped them to **overcome difficulties** in their health or wellbeing. This may have meant for some that they experienced a **reduction in the negative impacts from, or symptoms** of, their physical or mental health issues. Whereas for others overcoming difficulties may have meant that their physical or mental health problems remained unchanged, but they felt **less restricted by their physical or mental health problems**.

“I have to fill every weekday with a project, if I’m in [my house], I start to go down and get depressed.”

Focus Group attendee (no details)

“I think I would be in the same situation that I was if I hadn’t volunteered, I feel useful. At the end of the day I don’t think “what was the point of today,” I think, wow I did that and did that, I helped somebody, I’ve achieved something. You can’t describe the feel good factor in that and that’s the key to me.”

Violet, Female, Volunteer, Focus Group Attendee

“I have a problem with my back anyway and when I first started [at the group] because there is a lot of standing...I was a bit worried about that at first, but in actual fact it hasn’t been a problem. So that is the physical side of it. And yeah, my mental health, it is just about keeping my mind open, and I don’t know, reassuring to know that you can go somewhere and people will be supportive and will be friendly because sometimes it can be a bit intimidating if you are going somewhere and you are not quite sure how something is going to be and I was a bit the first time I went a little bit nervous, but not too bad as I had known about [the project] beforehand, so I kind of went with a bit more confidence than I might have done, and it was then, you know, great there, everyone is so accepting so friendly, yeah it has helped I think, a lot. As well, the confidence I think and also, I don’t really, it is not so much loneliness but just having somewhere different, and somewhere different to be, amongst other people, it is nice.”

Karen, Female, Age 60-69, Interviewee

“I’ve been suffering with depression for longer than I can remember. I realised I needed some help, and people have been helping me to join these groups to help with my depression.”

Graham, Male, Focus Group Attendee

The beneficiaries felt that something that had been offered to them through participating in the Time to Shine projects was **emotional and practical support**.

“It is a nice steady pace, and people are really supportive, and you always have loads of help there if you get stuck, and people help each other out as well, if someone seems to be struggling with something whether it is the [activity] or whether they are having a hard time in their own life really, there is always someone who will listen, people are very supportive which is good.”

Karen, Female, Age 60-69, Interviewee

“A lot of it is because of the caring responsibilities. If they have a partner who has dementia, they can’t just walk out the door and go to the shops. Friends tend to drift away, so they can be quite socially isolated. When we do meet up we have a good chat about things, it’s like a different point of contact for them, out of their usual bubble, so they can talk about things to me that maybe they can’t talk about to other people because I’m out of the situation. I find if you do open up about your own problems, they’ll open up about theirs as well, and that’s the whole point to be quite honest. If you’re talking about the weather for an hour, it’s no good to nobody you know, it’s mutually beneficial I’d say.”

Andrew, Male, Volunteer, Focus Group Attendee



The findings from the interviews and focus groups demonstrate that **there were broad impacts of TTS on beneficiaries**. Broadly these were increased community connections and belonging, benefits to physical and mental health, an improved sense of self and positive personal changes and growth. These impacts related to several of the overall TTS programme objectives, in particular that older people would be less isolated and more actively engaged in and valued by their communities.

The findings presented in this report complement the outcomes reported by respondents to the CMF evaluation questionnaire (see **Report 6: Participation, engagement and outcomes for older people**). The findings of the CMF questionnaire revealed that almost half of respondents experienced reduced loneliness and two thirds had increased wellbeing through involvement with TTS projects. The interview and focus group findings reported here reveal that the impacts of TTS extend even further than improvements to loneliness and wellbeing. In particular **many participants learnt new skills and gained increasing confidence in their own abilities**.

The findings presented in this report give greater understanding to the ways in which TTS may have benefitted wellbeing and the processes through which TTS may have reduced loneliness. For example, **wellbeing may have been improved by beneficiaries having a greater sense of self-worth and value, the enjoyment that came from participating in activities, or from greater emotional and practical support**. Similarly, **loneliness may have been reduced as beneficiaries formed new connections and made friends with other TTS beneficiaries**. Importantly, TTS may have been of benefit to beneficiary loneliness as many experienced a sense of community belonging both to the group they were participating in and more broadly connecting with others in their local area.

The findings presented in this report represent the views of those beneficiaries and volunteers who chose to attend focus group sessions or agreed to participate in face-to-face or telephone interviews. It is likely that the experiences of these select few beneficiaries will not be representative of all experiences of those participating in the projects funded by TTS. In particular, it may be that those beneficiaries who gained less from TTS, or even experienced some decline in their wellbeing while attending projects funded by TTS, may not be represented in the findings presented in this report.

A further consideration is that eight of the interviews were conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic and while there were social distancing measures imposed in the UK. These interviews focussed on individual experiences of accessing the projects funded by TTS prior to the pandemic. Nevertheless, the situation at the time of interview may have impacted on beneficiary reports. The specific impact of COVID-19 on beneficiaries is explored in a separate report (**Report 8: The Impact of COVID-19**).

Overall, the findings presented in this report demonstrate that TTS had broad benefits for beneficiaries and a positive impact on individual wellbeing and the broader community. The impacts reported here demonstrate that the beneficiary experiences met the original TTS programme objectives.

04

Related Reports

The final evaluation for the Time to Shine programme has been presented as a series of final reports.

Report 1: Executive Summary of Time to Shine

Report 2: Time to Shine Evaluation Methods

Report 3: Process Evaluation

Report 4: Intervention typologies

Report 5: Motivations and Barriers for beneficiary engagement

Report 6: Participation, engagement and outcomes for older people

Report 7: The impact of Time to Shine on project beneficiaries

Report 8: COVID-19 impact on the TTS programme

Report 9: Legacy, systems change and sustainability

Report 10: Test and Learn: Understanding the experiences and challenges of frontline organisations



