

Early reflections on cross-sector working between Third Sector organisations and Neighbourhood Teams in Leeds

July 2022



Introduction:

This short report is based on the experiences of staff in 9 different [Enhance](#) projects shared during a peer learning session. Two partners with pre-existing good relationships with their Neighbourhood Teams also shared their previous experiences to help others.

Third sector partners with long-established relationships with their Neighbourhood Teams felt that there are 5 key factors to help achieve good partnership working.:

Establish firm foundations

It takes time and effort to make connections and to build trust - partners noted that this isn't a quick process and good relationships develop over years. Respect for the work of older people's organisations in the third sector has gone from strength to strength since the development of Neighbourhood Network Schemes more than 20 years ago so there are fewer challenges to overcome in 2022. It was agreed that mutual respect is vital to developing good working relationships.

Make yourselves known to colleagues in Neighbourhood Teams, return calls and emails promptly, ask to attend team meetings, explain the Enhance service you deliver - and the wider work of your organisation - and listen to the needs of colleagues. Accept this will be continuous as teams are large and people change jobs.

Identify key contacts but work across the team

One partner noted that before the Covid-19 pandemic their organisation had a good relationship with local health services, but staff have moved on and there is a need to start building new relationships.

There are three Clinical Pathway Leads for covering different areas: South, North and West Leeds. They are fully aware of Enhance and can help you make links with other key contacts. Self-Management Facilitators are also aware of Enhance.

If you make contact with frontline Neighbourhood Team staff or other clinical staff during the early stages of the programme please be aware that they may or may not yet know about Enhance as communication is ongoing across multiple teams.

Share information

Attending Neighbourhood Team meetings helps put names to faces and creates the opportunity to explain your Enhance service offer in more detail, and answer questions. Third sector partners with long-established relationships with Neighbourhood Teams attend monthly Multi-Disciplinary Team meetings and GP Review meetings to discuss cases and agree packages of support for individuals.

Two partners said that they have designed leaflets to explain their Enhance service - and other services and activities available in their organisations - to potential participants. Neighbourhood Teams hand out these leaflets so that older people have a basic awareness of the support on offer before they receive a joint visit with an Enhance worker and clinical colleague.

Work collaboratively for mutual benefits

For partners with well-established relationships, involving Neighbourhood Team staff in the interviews for a third sector Enhance worker, and creating 'shadowing' opportunities for the Enhance staff member was mutually beneficial. Accompanying health-care assistants and occupational therapists on home visit meant they all got to see first-hand how the other sector works. Understanding each other's roles is key to good partnership working.

One partner talked of working in partnership to write funding bids, consulting widely to understand frontline issues so that new projects benefitted both sectors. They were also able to provide community-based office space for social workers to work

from, go to GP premises to work together on a 'Flu Vaccination roadshow' and host 'gentle exercise' sessions within a waiting room for a Diabetes clinic.

Another partner talked of using their community venue to deliver a leg clinic and host drop in Physio sessions where any older person could go for information and advice. Their venue also hosted a 'community health showcase' event involving different clinicians (e.g. Occupational Therapist, District Nurse) so that older members were able to meet clinicians and ask questions and get advice.

Focusing on person-centred support

The aim is for seamless integration of different services to provide excellent person-centred support for individuals: as one partner put it 'we are one piece in the jigsaw and have skills, knowledge and experience and information to share'.

Some older people may be new to Neighbourhood Team services, due to a change in health, but may have been a member of their local Neighbourhood Network for decades. Third sector partners may have information to share about a person's history, personality, family situation which compliments clinical service provision and facilitates person-centred care.

