



November 2018

Interim Report

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About us

Brightlife is a partnership of organisations from the public and third sectors in Cheshire West and Chester and is one of 14 National Lottery funded Ageing Better programmes set up by the Big Lottery Fund.

Formed in April 2015 and with a scope of five years, our purpose is to test and learn from innovative approaches to reducing isolation and loneliness for people aged over 50 in Cheshire West and Chester.

Isolation and loneliness are recognised nationally as a growing issue, however little evidence currently exists about how to tackle them.

The learning gathered from our research will provide evidence about what works and doesn't work, enabling future commissioners and policy makers to make informed decisions about future funding.

We work with people over fifty to inspire and enable individuals and communities to understand and act to reduce social isolation, striving to develop the way we work and capturing unique insights into isolation and loneliness.



“Nationally, loneliness is now recognised as a social epidemic. Let’s make sure that we are doing all we can in Cheshire West and Chester to change this for the future.”

Chris McClelland, Head of Brightlife



Changing Perceptions of Ageing

People in Cheshire West and Chester are living longer. Our increased longevity has resulted in a rapidly ageing population within our borough, so our aim is:

- To leave a legacy of sustainable services and activities within local communities
- An increased awareness of social isolation and loneliness
- More positive attitudes towards older people as assets within their communities.



By 2035 the number of people aged 65 and over will increase by **46%** to over **100,000**

100,000
over 65s



The number of people aged over 85 will more than double from **8,800** to almost **20,000**

20,000
over 85s

Connecting Communities

We are using two methods for testing approaches to loneliness and isolation. The first is through Social Prescribing pilots in Malpas, Tarporley, Winsford and some areas of Chester. Our Social Prescribing Co-ordinators work with people who are experiencing isolation and/or loneliness to re-connect them with their communities. The second method is commissioning services and activities to provide community-based solutions to isolation and loneliness:

1. Key Commissions follow a 'traditional' commissioning route with a competitive tendering process.
2. Bright Ideas funding enables local groups and organisations to come forward with solutions that they think will work in their communities.

What is most significant about Brightlife's commissioning process is that it is led by older people through the Older People's Alliance (OPA).

This report shares the learning we have gathered to date and the challenges we have faced along the way. Our learning here reflects what we have found and it is hoped the evidence will shape a national solution to end loneliness and isolation.

Commissioning - how we did it

Older People as Commissioners

One of Brightlife's core principles is the meaningful involvement of older people in shaping what we do. This is most evident in our commissioning processes, where older people have sole responsibility for awarding contracts.

We trained our Older People's Alliance (OPA) members in commissioning to make up the panels for both our Key Commissions and Bright Ideas. Advice and support at the panels is given by members of the Brightlife Team and Brightlife Partnership, but all decision-making powers are delegated to the OPA members.

Commissioning Community-based Solutions

Brightlife has taken two very different approaches to commissioning services and activities that will provide community-based solutions to isolation and loneliness:

1. **Key Commissions** follow a 'traditional' commissioning route with a competitive tendering process.
2. **Bright Ideas** funding enables local groups and organisations to come forward with solutions that they think will work in their communities.

1. Key Commissions

Key commissions are awarded using an outcomes-based tendering model. Early on in the project, we consulted with communities in our Social Prescribing areas and commissioned what local people told us might help to improve the lives of older people. Whilst some very successful projects resulted from this process, there were a number of contracts we were not able to award.

Learning from these early commissions taught us that involving potential providers in the consultation process would be beneficial and so we adopted this approach. We also re-designed our tendering process based on feedback from providers and our commissioning panels. These changes resulted in us being able to award contracts for all specifications we have since put out.

Key commissions awarded more recently have focused on thematic rather than locality-based issues. We wanted to address some of the themes that result in individuals being more likely to experience isolation and loneliness. Creating open specifications based around these themes resulted in the commissioning of a number of inventive projects for people living with long term conditions, carers and older men as well as an ambitious partnership initiative to create dementia inclusive communities.

“ We found all the staff we were in contact with to be most professional during the application process and the support they offered helped with our applications to the Brightlife funding opportunities. Having a panel with older people really indicated to us how thorough the process was and one which I enjoyed. ”

Richard Brown, CEO, Listening Ear

“ This is the first time older people have been so actively involved in a project of this scope and been central to the decision making at all levels. With all the learning and experience we now have, it will be interesting to see how the Brightlife philosophy will impact other projects in future years. ”

Margaret Yorke, Vice Chair, Older People's Alliance

2. Bright Ideas

Bright Ideas is our innovative, community-led funding approach.

It was developed on the principle that individuals and groups who are community based, or work with a community of interest, are often best placed to identify issues and create solutions that will work for their target group. Funding of up to £20,000 was awarded to those ideas with the most potential to provide valuable evidence about what works.

The approach has resulted in initiatives that work with a diverse range of older people, including those from minoritised groups.

The first round of Bright Ideas resulted in valuable learning about how best to engage and support individuals and community groups to apply for funding. As a result, we adapted the initial process to give each application the best possible chance of succeeding. We also increased the level of support available from both Brightlife and elsewhere.

Support for Providers

Both the Key Commissions and Bright Ideas processes have taught us the value of supporting providers, even before they are considering responding to a specification or making an application. Over time, we have been able to improve and strengthen our approach which has paid dividends.

Providers receive support from the Brightlife Commissioning Team and from Chester Voluntary Action (CVA), who have been contracted to provide this.

For Key Commissions, providers are involved in consultation before a specification is designed, invited to workshops once the specification is released and offered support by CVA to write their tender. Bright Ideas providers are supported by Brightlife and CVA to develop their initial idea, complete their application and attend panel.

Post contract, support for all commissions comes in the form of a partnership-based approach to contract performance, where test and learn plays a major role. Individual support with marketing, compliance with the evaluation and developing sustainability plans is also given. CVA also runs a provider network, which has been extremely successful in enabling providers to collaborate and share learning.



Commissioned Activities - who we have funded

Key Commissions

- Chester Asset Mapping –Chester Voluntary Action (£9,423)
- Social Activity Malpas –Community Compass (£30,146)
- Social Activity Winsford –Community Compass (£41,810)
- Malpas Great Outdoors –Cheshire Wildlife Trust (£49,500)
- Business Support –Chester Voluntary Action (£74,861)
- Buddy Scheme –Royal Voluntary Service (RVS) (£37,695)
- New Beginnings –Retain Wellbeing CIC (£60,000)
- Digital Buddies –Here and Now Chester (£60,000)
- The Arts of Ageing –Workers’ Educational Assoc.(WEA) (£21,684)
- Share Club –Community Compass (£128,372)
- Winsford Super Shed –Age UK Cheshire (£99,602)
- Men’s Mental Health –Listening Ear (£98,556)
- Connecting Carers –Cheshire & Warrington Carers Trust (£96,170)
- Connect Up –Neuromuscular Centre (£50,730)
- Bright Memories –Cheshire & Warrington Carers Trust (£349,506)
- Buddying and Befriending Scheme –Cheshire Community Development Trust (CCDT) (£104,984)

Total £1,313,039



Bright Ideas

Brightlife has also commissioned 34 Bright Ideas projects with a total value in excess of £500,000. These Bright Ideas have come from local community groups and voluntary organisations who have told us what provision is needed in our area. These projects will work with more than a thousand over 50s to test ways of reducing social isolation and loneliness. Projects will be for 1 – 2 years in duration and have each been awarded between £2,500 and £20,000 by our Brightlife panel of older people (Older People’s Alliance).

Spring 2016 funding £45,273 was awarded to:

- Abbot’s Wood – Digital Peer Training (£2,500)
- Muir Housing – Brighter Days (£5,596)
- OPAL (Older People Active Lives) – New Horizons (£8,752)
- OPAL (Older People Active Lives) – What’s Cooking (£8,425)
- Body Positive – Silver Rainbows (£20,000)

Autumn 2017 funding £238,131 was awarded to:

- LIVE! – Bridging the Gap (£17,699)
- CHAWREC (Cheshire and Warrington Race and Equality Centre) – CommUnity Kitchen (£19,113)
- Holy Trinity Church – Blacon on the Move (£15,700)
- The Welding Academy – Fabweld 50+ (£19,905)
- Flatt Lane and Stanney Grange Community Centre – Lite Bites Lunch Club (£10,258)
- Active Cheshire – Sporting Memories (£20,000)
- Cheshire Deaf Society / Deafness Support Network – Sparkle Cafe (£19,876)
- Cheshire Wildlife Trust – Create For Nature (£19,070)
- Vision Support – Vision Supported Communities (£20,000)
- Groundwork Cheshire Lancashire and Merseyside – Growing Connections (£18,926)
- MHA Ellesmere Port and Neston Live at Home Scheme – Not Ready Yet (£19,700)
- Motherwell Cheshire CIO – Bright Stars (£17,884)
- The Neuromuscular Centre, Cheshire Centre for Independent Living, Cheshire and Warrington Carers Trust – Read and Connect (£20,000)

Winter 2017 funding £148,673 was awarded to:

- The Conservation Volunteers – Young and Green at Heart (£20,000)
- Bright Lights Theatre Company – Neston Theatre Art Club (£9,120)
- EPNAVCO – Lively Lunchtime (£11,161)
- Vicars Cross Community Centre – Senior Screen (£10,257)
- Heal Earth – Women Makers Fab Club 50+ (£17,730)
- Age UK Cheshire – Sharing Time (£18,101)
- Listening Ear – Fab Cheshire West (£17,620)
- DIAL West Cheshire – Dial House “T” Club (£14,500)
- Body Positive – Silver Rainbows (£20,000)
- Muir Housing – Brighter Days (£10,184)

Spring 2018 funding £121,878 was awarded to:

- The Reader – Brightening Lives with Shared Reading (£19,955)
- Snow Angels – Happy Mondays (£18,682)
- Malpas Cancer Friends (£12,000)
- Haylo Theatre – Gather Together (£19,715)
- We Embrace CIC– Caring Companions Cheshire (£16,130)
- Bridge Wellness Gardens – Better Lives Club for over 50s (£18,320)
- Cheshire Agricultural Chaplaincy – Meet and Eat (£17,076)



Social Prescribing

Social Prescribing, sometimes referred to as 'community referral', is a means of enabling GPs, nurses and other healthcare professionals to refer into a range of local, non-clinical services through contact with a 'link' worker.

Recognising that people's health is determined primarily by a range of social, economical and environmental factors, Social Prescribing seeks to address people's needs in a holistic way. It also aims to support individuals to take greater control of their health.

Social Prescribing schemes can involve a variety of activities which are typically provided by voluntary and community sector organisations. Examples include volunteering, arts activities, group learning, gardening, befriending, cookery, healthy eating advice and a range of sports.

Brightlife's Social Prescribing Offer

Social Prescribing is the only service that is delivered directly by Brightlife. We initially set up three pilot projects in Malpas, Winsford and some parts of Chester with an additional rural location of Tarporley added in October 2018. These pilots are testing how effective the service is as a way of helping to reconnect people with their communities and increase wellbeing.

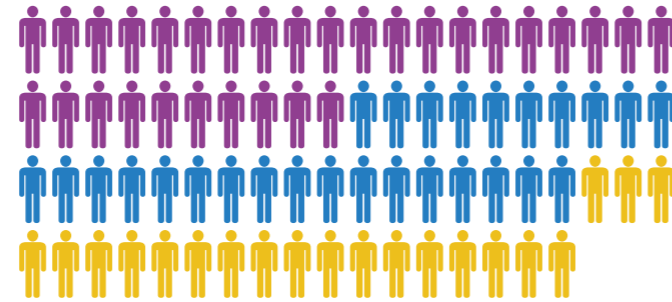
Anyone who is over 50 and experiencing or at risk of loneliness or isolation can be referred to the service. Our Social Prescribing Co-ordinators receive referrals from a wide range of sources including health professionals, social workers, community projects, family and friends, and self-referrals.

Our Co-ordinators work with each individual in a person-centred way to explore what it is they would like to do and to help them overcome any barriers that are preventing them from becoming more socially active.

Social Prescribing involves supporting people to access activities that best suit their own specific interests and skill set. In addition to this, our Co-ordinators run regular drop-in sessions in each area.

Results so Far

Sample of 77 participants who have completed an entry CMF questionnaire when they entered Brightlife and a follow up CMF questionnaire either during their engagement with Brightlife (if they are existing participants) or when they exited the project.



39%
HAVE IMPROVED

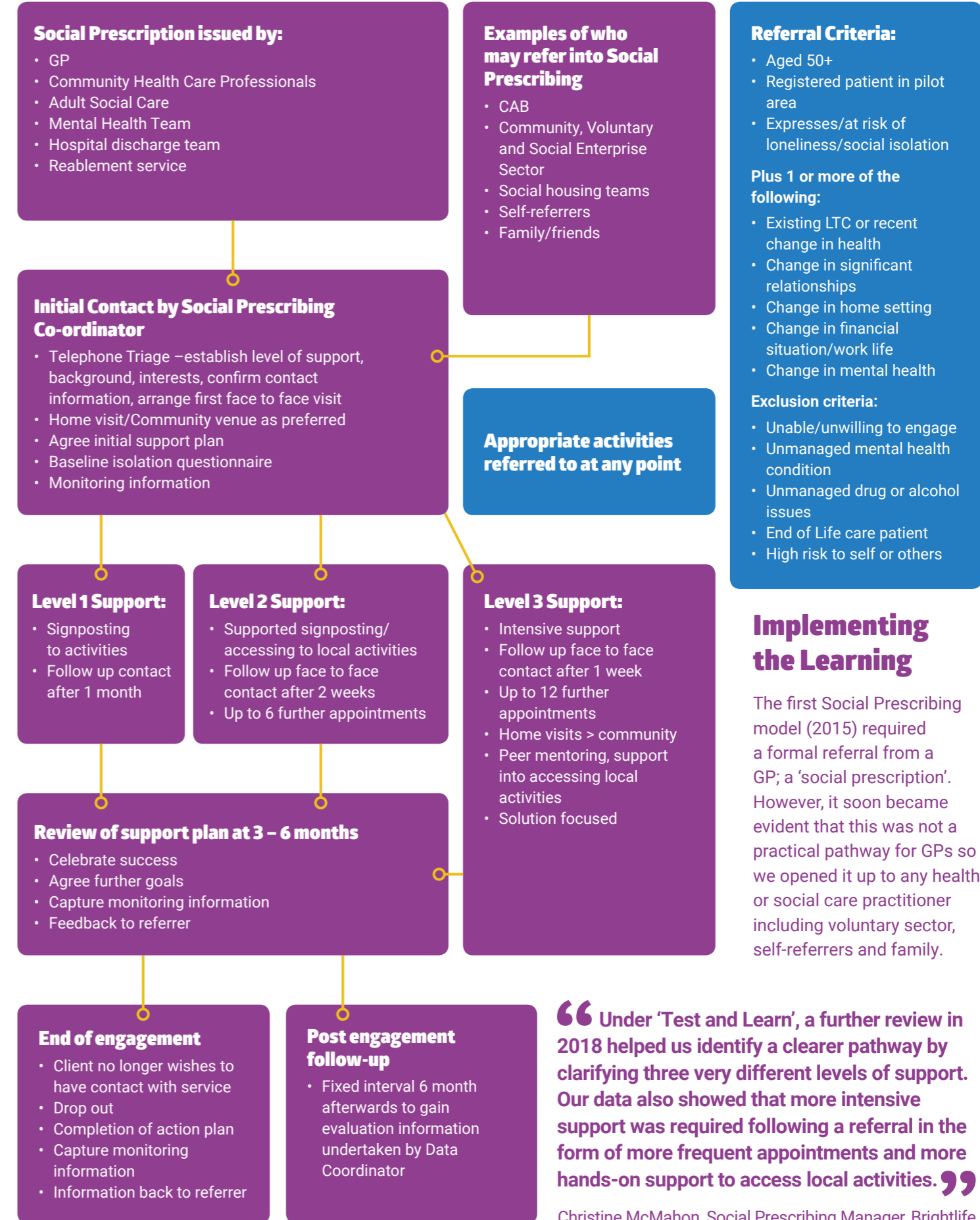
35%
STAYED THE SAME

26%
DETERIORATED

It is perceived as a positive outcome if a participant is maintaining their current position and not deteriorating. This is because the majority of Social Prescribing participants are at high risk of becoming socially isolated and lonely.

- There are **271** Social Prescribing participants who have completed some sort of evaluation tool. Of that figure **78%** are in the age range **70+** and **31%** are **85+** years old
- Of the 271 participants **85%** live with a long-standing illness or disability
- **68%** live alone.

Brightlife Social Prescribing Model



Volunteer Gallery

Older People's Alliance

The Older People's Alliance (OPA) was founded in Autumn 2015 as the formal voice of older people within the Brightlife project. A group of eight highly committed and enthusiastic individuals with a wide range of skills volunteered to take on this role to champion input from older people into all aspects of the project.



"I joined the project in its first year and am proud to be part of a team of volunteers that has played such a central role in Brightlife's development. It's so important that the thoughts, ideas and comments of older people are captured and valued throughout the course of the project.

As the chair of the OPA, I have been involved in many activities as an ambassador for Brightlife including attending the Ageing Better conference, presenting to regional groups and representing the OPA at Chester Pride.

The challenge for the team now is what kind of impact the group can have in Cheshire West and Chester post-Brightlife. Sustainability is the one of the key themes that the OPA is now looking at, to ensure that the voice of the older people in the borough continues to be heard once the Brightlife funding ends in April 2020."

Viv Gee, Chair, Older People's Alliance



"All members of the OPA received commissioning training. This was vital in developing our role in selecting service contractors in a lawful, robust and equitable manner. As part of that training we agreed common criteria and scoring mechanisms so that sub groups adopted a standard approach and acted in a consistent manner."

Philip Hearfield, Member, Older People's Alliance



"It's been so interesting and informative to be involved in the third sector and I've really enjoyed taking part in a number of community engagement events. Having been in business for many years I've found being a member of the OPA extremely interesting ... I didn't feel I was ready to just retire and put my feet up, so it has been most satisfying to put my skills and knowledge to good use for Brightlife!"

Pat Bright, Member, Older People's Alliance

Commissioning Training

A key function of the OPA has been their role in the commissioning process. OPA members were given training in commissioning by Hall Aitken and Brightlife in 2015 to prepare them for this aspect of their work. The training included background information about how Brightlife commissions projects, the role of test and learn, the commissioning cycle and scoring tender responses.

Since then, OPA members have commissioned 48 different projects and have been instrumental in re-designing Brightlife's commissioning processes in response to learning.

Co-Researchers

At Brightlife we work closely with the Centre for Ageing and Mental Health at the University of Chester to conduct scientific evaluation of all our projects. The aim is to produce a comprehensive report on the social connectivity of older people living in Cheshire West and Chester that will be used in the development of a sustainable community engagement plan.

Our Co-Researchers take part in different aspects of the research process including data-gathering, analysis and report-writing. Full training and support is given to all Co-Researchers through a five-week training programme after which they are given additional mentoring support throughout the project.



"I was attracted to the Brightlife Co-Researcher role as it was different. The role covered a subject of interest and I was curious about University involvement. Once trained, there was flexibility of time commitment and a range of activities. After training I have interviewed participants and written surveys for service providers, analysed the results, produced reports and presented the results. Recently I started capturing comments from participant questionnaires and will analyse these for a further report. Overall I have enjoyed working with University staff and other Co-researchers, learnt new skills and added a welcome additional dimension to retirement."

Garnett Carr

Community Connectors

Community Connectors support the work of our Social Prescribing Co-ordinators at Brightlife drop-in sessions.



"Being a Community Connector really opens your eyes to the huge impact loneliness can have on the lives of some people. When people are on their own, with only the TV and books as companions, it causes a withdrawal from society which can have a huge impact on their health and wellbeing.

I believe my participation with the group is helping to alleviate some of this loneliness. The group is very enthusiastic about the quizzes I run, which encourages competition amongst them. The musician I brought in was very well received and to see everyone singing and even dancing along to tunes they remember was a joy to watch! The group was a great support to me personally when I recently went along for a removal of a cataract as many of them had had the same operation and were able to reassure me as to the procedures involved. I'm fortunate that I can get out and about doing what I enjoy, but we all need to be mindful that our health and mental capabilities can alter as we get older. Groups like Brightlife's go a long way to helping less fortunate people and I'm proud to be part of it all."

Angie Hamlett Orme, Community Connector, Winsford

“ I'm proud to be part of it all. ”

Evaluation

Activities are funded by Brightlife to gather learning and evidence about reducing isolation and loneliness for the over 50s. We want to know what works, what doesn't and that's why every project we commission is required to participate in the Brightlife evaluation.

The evaluation is a great opportunity to transform services and influence future commissioning decisions.

The purpose of the evaluation is not only to improve the life and wellbeing of our current participants but also to identify gaps in provision, with the aim of achieving long term improvement of delivery within the sector. There are two main elements to this:

1. The National Evaluation (Ecorys)



All the Big Lottery's Ageing Better programmes, including Brightlife, are being evaluated at a national level by an organisation called Ecorys. Participants and volunteers are asked to complete a questionnaire called a CMF (Common Measurement Framework). The responses provided by participants are then entered into a national database and analysed by Ecorys to capture the journey of participants from when they enter Brightlife to when they leave the project.

2. The Local Evaluation (The University of Chester)



Brightlife is also being evaluated at a local level by the University of Chester. The University is also analysing the data from the CMF questionnaires, but in more detail. The University team is carrying out interviews with participants, volunteers, commissioned providers and project staff to understand how Brightlife is working as a whole. They are also undertaking a Social Return on Investment (SROI) study to understand the wider impact Brightlife is having on the local health and social care sector.

Supporting our Providers

Brightlife plays a key role in preparing smaller providers for the ever-changing landscape of the third sector. The sector increasingly needs to measure impact and outcomes for participants and we help providers do this by offering them bespoke, provider-centred support with the CMF process.

Once a project has been commissioned, the Brightlife Data Co-ordinator meets the provider and the team directly responsible for administering the CMF to participants on a one-to-one basis. The Data Co-ordinator has first-hand experience of administering the CMF with participants at Brightlife's Social Prescribing drop-in events to better understand the challenges faced by providers. This experience has offered a unique insight into the best way to support our providers.

Support varies depending on the needs of each provider, ranging from a single visit to on-going support until the provider feels confident in the evaluation process.

Test and Learn

Through test and learn we have been able to identify areas of good practice from those providers who have been most successful in encouraging participants to take part in the evaluation. We offer providers practical tips for enabling effective evaluation and how best to promote the significance of the evaluation in a positive way. We help them anticipate common questions that participants reluctant to take part in the evaluation might ask them. Brightlife will also support the provider by attending their events and speaking directly with participants on the benefits of taking part in the evaluation.



Sharing the Learning

As testimony to the positive relationship that has been forged between Brightlife and the local evaluators, Brightlife plays an active role in all the University's Evaluation Days.

The Participant's Voice

Within a research project, sometimes the participant's true voice is unheard because of the confines of the evaluation tool being used. Following feedback from our participants, who expressed concerns about feeling like they were simply a number in a research project, with the approval of Ecorys, we have added a section to the CMF designed to capture the thoughts and feelings of our participants. This person-centred approach enhances the qualitative aspect of the evaluation being undertaken by the University of Chester.

My world was very small. My wife has great difficulty in walking, I never used a computer at work then since I retired and with the 2 children leaving home, my world has got even smaller.

The computer class has opened a whole new world for me which I did not know, with teachers who are friendly, helpful and do not judge me... I have gained so much, it's opened my mind to other possibilities. I'm free to ask about other classes to learn about subjects I am interested in. I have carried the burden for so many years and now I am free. Thank you.

Group Member, Digital Buddies (Here and Now)



“ We really value the close relationship the University has with Brightlife as this has enabled us to evaluate the project with a unique insight into what the people on the front line are experiencing. ”

Paul Kingston, Professor of Ageing and Mental Health, Director at Centre for Ageing and Mental Health, University of Chester

Case Studies

Chris Ellis (66)

What's Cooking

Chris had been suffering from depression after the loss of her husband and hadn't been confident enough to socialise and mix with people she didn't know. After finding out about the Frodsham What's Cooking group, she has never looked back. She explains, "I am a completely different person now to who I was before coming along to these events! It's really helped me to come out of my shell and I've met so many different people and been introduced to other group events and activities which I wouldn't have been aware of otherwise. My daughter jokes that I have a better social life than hers now! It has been such a Godsend to meet other people locally and not just spend all day at home alone in front of the TV."



Christine Kelly (61)

Heal Earth

Christine explains, "A couple of years ago I had a breakdown and wasn't able to work. I realise now looking back that I was a workaholic and it was my body's way of telling me that I needed to slow down. I was suffering with anxiety and realising I couldn't go back to work, felt like I had lost my purpose, so I wanted to do something that would get me out of the house helping others in some way. After attending a Brightlife event I found out about the Heal Earth sessions so volunteered at the Fab Maker Workshops. I haven't looked back since then, it has really helped me to increase my confidence and give me a purpose again."



Steve Saddington (64)

Brighter Days

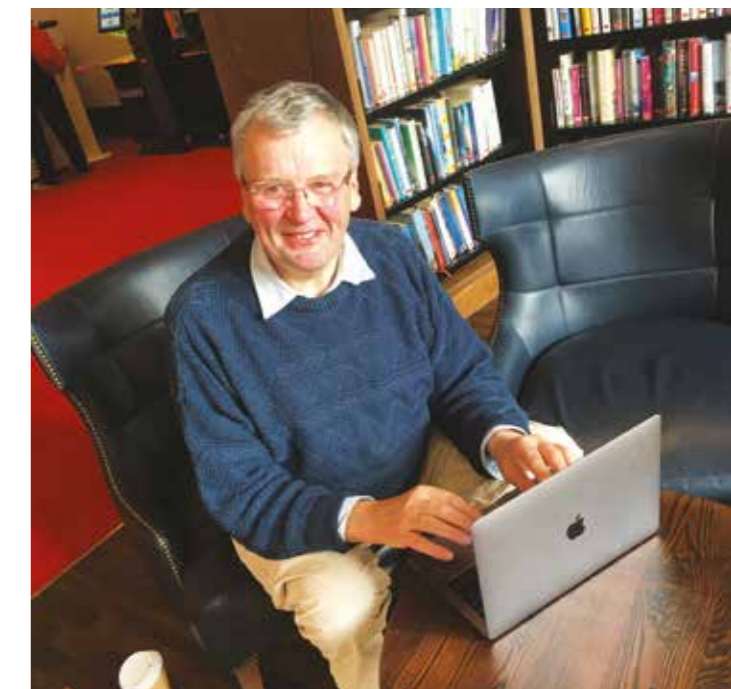
Steve volunteers at some of the Brighter Days social events. He explains that he likes to get involved because it puts a smile on people's faces, "It can be lonely sitting in your room all day every day and when we have activities like quizzes and music events, I like to help out. Holding events on-site also enables some of the residents who can't get out and about to still enjoy themselves."

Frank Samuel (75)

Digital Buddies

Frank retired three years ago after a 30-year career as a milkman. He had never had to think about technology or computers up until that point because despite the fact he had 450 customers, he knew their names, orders, how much money they owed, every detail, all without even a rounds book!

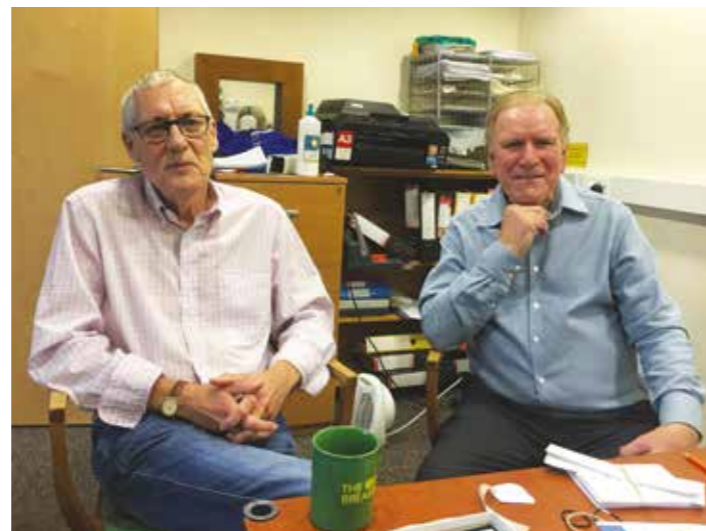
Due to the unsociable hours, Frank hadn't ever had much time for activities outside of work so after retiring he went through a period of depression, not wanting to get out of bed to face the day. Around this time he needed to access a Government service and the only way to do so was online. Although he had a computer and an iPad, Frank didn't know how to use them and he felt too old to learn how. He explains, "This lack of knowledge left me feeling really disenfranchised so I went along to my local library to find out if there was any help I could access but they just advised going on a night course. That felt too overwhelming at the time and I was in denial about needing to learn to do it. But the reality was I needed to join the modern world – these days you can't buy a cinema ticket or pay for a toll bridge without doing so online!"



David Kirsopp (67) and John McKinley (78)

Bright Lights Theatre Group (Little Actors Neston)

David Kirsopp and John McKinley first met one another at the Bright Lights Theatre Group early in 2018 and have since become firm friends. Whilst David admits to being quiet and John loves to talk, they have a lot of things in common. They both live alone and admit that it is good to have a regular commitment that gets them out in the company of other people. David explains, "Coming along to the acting group has been great to get me out of the house and get talking."



"It took me another year to pluck up the courage to go back to the library and admit I needed some help with simple technology. That time they told me about Digital Buddies and I went along to my first session where everyone was so friendly and helpful with no judgment whatsoever. The volunteers helped me to learn about how to do all of the basics and I have become amazed that there is such a vast world out there! Now I am proud to say I can even help other mature people who come along to the group and it has really boosted my confidence!"

Case Studies

Sue Walker (65)

Silver Rainbows

Sue only realised that she was a lesbian a couple of years ago after retiring from her career in midwifery. Living in a rural community, there wasn't anyone to reach out and talk to. She was a member of a choir called Decibellas and a young lesbian friend encouraged her to join the Manchester Lesbian Gay Choir where she began to meet more LGBT friends, one of whom introduced her to the Silver Rainbows group in Chester. She explains, "It was terribly isolating coming out as a woman in my 60s and I didn't have anyone to really talk to about it. Going along to the Silver Rainbows group has opened up so many more doors for me and it has been great to talk to people without feeling judged."

Continuing her love of choirs, Sue joined the Proud Marys Choir and has performed at various different Pride events. This has allowed Sue to make more new friendships, "I felt very vulnerable when I first came out and wanted to meet other lesbian women my age. Silver Rainbows has opened doors to other groups like the Proud Marys, I really enjoy my get-togethers with them."



“

Going along to the Silver Rainbows group has opened up so many more doors for me and it has been great to talk to people without feeling judged. ”

Sue Walker, Silver Rainbows

Statistics on Loneliness

According to Age UK, by 2025 two million people over 50 will suffer from loneliness, which will be a **49%** increase on the number recorded in 2015-16.

17% of older people in the UK have contact with friends, family or neighbours less than once a week.

By 2025 loneliness will affect more than two million people, a **49%** increase on the 1.36m socially isolated in 2015-16. This is a major public health concern, because if loneliness is not addressed it can become chronic, seriously affecting people's health and wellbeing". Age UK (October 2018)

Health Risks

- Loneliness, living alone and poor social connections are as bad for your health as smoking 15 cigarettes a day. (Holt-Lunstad, 2010)
- Loneliness is worse for you than obesity. (Holt-Lunstad, 2010)
- Lonely people are more likely to suffer from dementia, heart disease and depression. (Valtorta et al, 2016) (James et al, 2011) (Cacioppo et al, 2006)
- Loneliness is likely to increase your risk of death by 29% (Holt-Lunstad, 2015)

People in Cheshire West and Chester are living longer.



By 2035 the number of people aged 65 and over will increase by 46% to over

100,000



The number of people aged over 85 will more than double from 8,800 to almost

20,000



Pauline Stott (61)

FabWeld

Pauline found out about the FabWeld group on Facebook and despite having never done any kind of metalwork before decided to give it a go. "I have kept all of the horseshoes my prized horse used to wear and I am really looking forward to making something out of them that I can keep. Some people might be put off at the sound of welding but it really is easier than you think. We get shown what to do and given supervision to make our own projects. The group is great because we give one another advice and guidance along the way."

"Being lonely is associated with an increased risk in developing coronary disease, heart disease and stroke. It's comparable risk factor for early death is smoking 15 cigarettes per day."

Dr Jonathan Griffiths,
Winsford GP and Chair of NHS Vale Royal CCG

Sustainability and Legacy

One of the greatest challenges for any project with a fixed term funding agreement is how to achieve a legacy and sustainability for the future. As we are now at the mid-point period of the Brightlife project, the partnership has begun to seriously address this issue.

Our first task was to understand the difference between sustainability and legacy. The understanding Brightlife is coming to is that legacy is primarily the learning we leave behind whilst sustainability is about the activity that continues beyond the life of the project.

Legacy: All that you leave behind

The essence of Brightlife has been to 'Test and Learn' to identify what does and doesn't work, to gather the evidence and share it in the belief it can be utilised to improve the lives of older people in the future. We consider the Brightlife legacy to be about hearts and minds-how people will think, feel and do differently in the future, how older people are treated as equal partners in decision-making, the impact they will have on systems and culture and how the Brightlife spirit and philosophy will live on within stakeholders (individuals, partners, organisations and providers).

Perhaps the most important aspect of the Brightlife philosophy has been to inculcate a culture of genuine co-production involving older people, whether that's at a strategic governance and commissioning level or at their interface with an activity and how they engage with it. Brightlife is gathering a significant volume of evidence on co-production which includes collaboration, communication, commissioning, capability and community assets.

At a very practical level, Brightlife is developing an accessible and engaging online resource where project evidence will be retained and available to anybody interested in addressing loneliness and social isolation in older people. The Brightlife Legacy website will be launched in January 2019.

“Age UK Cheshire has recently revisited its strategic plan examining our vision, mission, values and ambitions moving forward. The learning we have taken from the Brightlife project has played a critical role in influencing our future direction.”

Dale Maskell, CEO, Age UK Cheshire

Sustainability: To infinity and beyond

Sustainability of funded activities

Sustaining Brightlife funded activities is a key priority and all our providers are challenged to develop a sustainability plan with the support of the Brightlife team and Chester Voluntary Action (CVA). Naturally, in a competitive funding environment, not all activities can be sustained however, even at this stage, there is a range of activities that have continued without Brightlife funding.

Sustainability models are focused upon introducing affordable charging models, volunteer-led activities and accessing other funding sources (see table opposite for examples of already established self-sustaining activities).

Continuation of a Social Prescribing model

The innovative Brightlife place-based Social Prescribing model is attracting considerable interest and there is a commitment to working with key stakeholders to develop evidence-based and deliverable options that can be presented to future funding agencies. Brightlife's Social Prescribing offer already has the support of significant partners in the Health and Social Care sector.

Maintaining a legitimate influential voice for older people

Brightlife's governance is characterised by the significance and genuine role of older people in decision making and strategic influence. The Brightlife Older People's Alliance is determined to ensure they continue to have a voice in influencing the policy and practice of key local partners as well as having the opportunity of campaigning on national issues effecting older people. They intend to engage with strategic partners and other representative bodies (eg the Cheshire West and Chester funded Older People's Network) on how their meaningful involvement can be sustained.

Continuation of a Brightlife brand or entity

Brightlife has established itself as a strong and positive brand synonymous with the social isolation and loneliness issues that affect older people. The partnership recognises the value of the brand and is considering how it can be sustained either as an ongoing entity or as a brand that could be utilised by one or more partners or stakeholders.

Continued Activities after Brightlife Funding

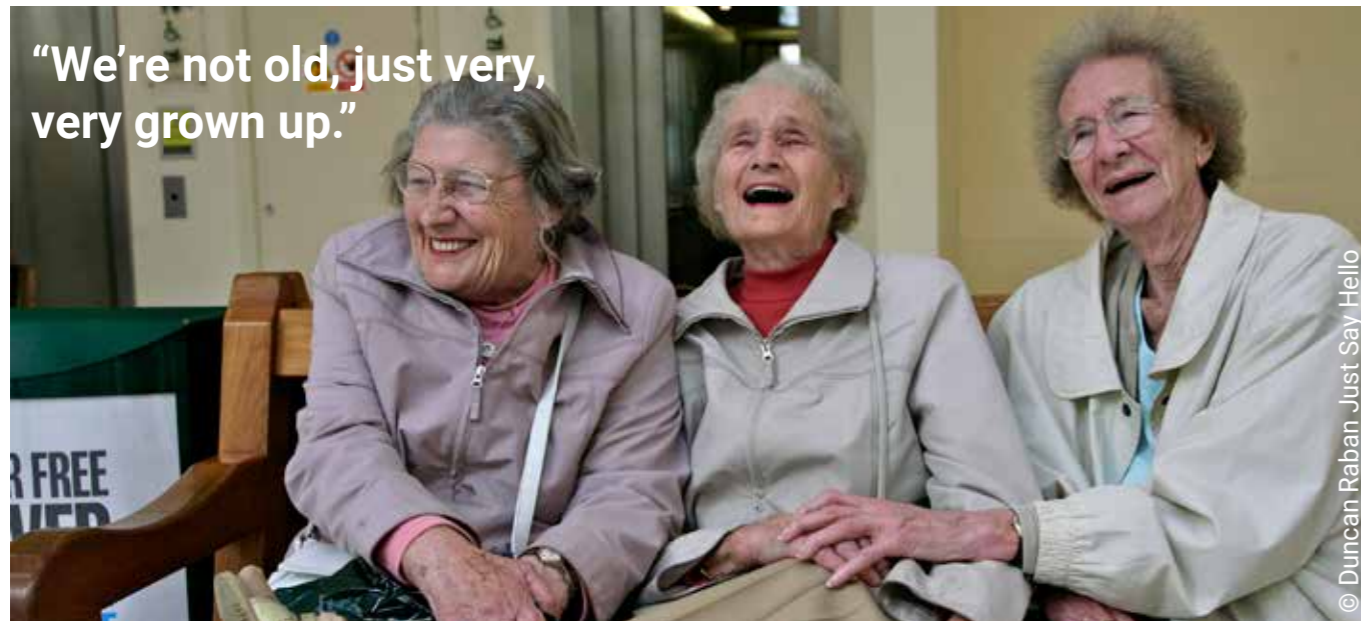
Provider	Project	Sustained Element(s)	How Sustained
Cheshire Wildlife Trust	Great Outdoors Malpas	Ladies' Birdwatching Group	Participants pay for the activity
Community Compass	Social Activity Malpas	Friday Friends	Combination of volunteer-led activities and financial contribution from participants
Community Compass	Social Activity Winsford	Winsford Compass Club	Combination of volunteer-led activities and financial contribution from participants
WEA	The Arts of Ageing	Tai Chi	Participants pay for the activity
WEA	The Arts of Ageing	Art Course	Participants pay for the activity
Here and Now	Digital Buddies	Weekly Storyhouse Drop-in	Combination of volunteer-led activity and the contribution by Storyhouse of a free room
Body Positive	Silver Rainbows	Proud Marys Choir	Participants pay for the activity

“Brightlife's Social Prescribing enables me to help my patients in ways that I can't when I work alone... it's a perfect example of what good healthcare is all about – making people feel better and improving their quality of life.”

Dr Achla Damania, Swanlow Medical Centre, Winsford



Marketing and Communications



The Challenge

How do we target an older, socially isolated, hard-to-reach audience of 50+s that doesn't want to be told they are old ('old' is always 10 years older than you are) or admit they are lonely (as this has negative implications that they are sad, desperate or vulnerable)?

Establishing a Strong Brand

Brightlife is one of the few Ageing Better projects that doesn't reference age in its title. As the project has evolved and the more participants we've spoken to, we have come to understand and appreciate the advantage this has given us when targeting our demographic of people over 50. Age is implicit within the Brightlife brand through messaging and imagery but with a positive, aspirational focus on connectedness and being valued - rather than dwelling on images of sadness and isolation (more suited to fundraising campaigns). We are speaking to human beings with individual personalities; many of whom are in the darkest times of their lives, so we need to be thoughtful and compassionate in all our communications.

Supporting Commissioned Activities

There is a common misunderstanding across the Third Sector that spending money on marketing rather than

service delivery is somehow wasteful. We encourage all our commissioned activities to allocate 5-10% of their budget to marketing because without a strong brand and effectively targeted campaign from the outset, it is ultimately more wasteful to host activities to empty chairs. Another frequent misconception is that producing flyers is 'marketing'. We have therefore worked closely with our commissioned services to help them create a strong brand and message across a range of platforms (PR, web, social media, advertising, joint campaigns, networking, partnership promotions and festival showcase events).

Local Partnerships and National Campaigns

During Brightlife's lifetime we have been fortunate to benefit from an increased awareness of issues surrounding loneliness on a national level from the appointment of the world's first Loneliness Minister to Jo Cox Memorial Grants and the annual Great Get Together celebration. For the first time, issues relating to our ageing population are being addressed across the media in programmes such as The Real Marigold Hotel series and Old People's Home for 4 Year Olds. Increased awareness of national celebration days such as Silver Sunday and National Older People's Day have also helped to link the regional Ageing Better projects to a national movement that is putting issues surrounding social isolation and loneliness in the spotlight.



Make Age Irrelevant

It has been a great challenge to identify a suitable marketing campaign message that will appeal to such a diverse audience (in terms of their cultural, social and generational influence). Just as no advertiser would attempt to create one campaign that could effectively target a 0-50 age group, neither can we expect to create a campaign message that would resonate across the three generations in the 50+ age group. Through focus groups and feedback, we quickly learnt to 'make age irrelevant' in our communications.

Brightlife is working in partnership with a range of local agencies from across the voluntary, public and private sectors in Cheshire West and Chester to identify, design and implement a wide range of innovative solutions to address loneliness and isolation in people aged 50+ across the borough.





 @lovebrightlife

 @BrightlifeCheshire

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Brightlife is a partnership led by Age UK Cheshire. Reg charity no 1091608

Brightlife  
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