



Older People in Scotland Conference



Scotland's population is ageing. Over 660,000 households in Scotland have at least one member over pensionable age.

In 15 years over 15 per cent of Scotland's population will be over 65. So where do they live? And what do they contribute? This was the theme for the speeches given by the Minister, Malcolm Chisholm, and Pat Bagot, Branch Head of Supporting People, at the conference on older people in Edinburgh on 23 January.

The Minister acknowledged that older people play an essential role in society. Their contribution, whether personal or professional, paid or voluntary, is immense. They represent an enormous asset. The Executive therefore want to be sure of two things, first that their contribution is valued and encouraged and secondly that they receive the services they need when they need them.

While the Minister covered older peoples issues across the board, Pat concentrated on planning of housing and services for older people. Whilst sheltered housing a few years ago was the main option with the advance of technology the preferred option now for many may be to stay in their own homes for as long as possible. Expectations have changed. So has the environment. Previously, sheltered housing was built near shops and post offices, however, there are no longer as many local shops and post offices around and many services are delivered with the aid of technology. Could this new assistive technology – telecare – be the future?

More older people are now home owners. What are their choices? There is a growing concern that many houses built today will not be suitable for ageing homeowners. A problem for planners is finding out what people want so they can develop lifetime homes suitable for aging owners as well as young families. A key question now is how many of the benefits of sheltered housing can be made available to everyone in their own homes – without losing social networks and participation in the community.

Project 101 – Independence with a smile

Snakes and Ladders, interactive quizzes on local issues, and a housing options advice textline for young users ... all this and more as one project in East Dunbartonshire runs a dynamic Independent Living Skills (ILS) Programme for young people.

Established in May 2001 with the aim of providing information, advice and support to young people needing help in finding or sustaining a place to live in East Dunbartonshire, Project 101 is funded by Supporting People and East Dunbartonshire Council's Housing and Home Support Services. Project 101 created the ILS Programme to meet the needs of young people starting out in the big world on their own.

Fun and games

Structured around five live sessions and a shiny new resource pack, the ILS Programme invites young people to come into the centre and learn skills for living independently. 'There's been a lot of interest in this programme' commented Lynda Jones, project worker at Project 101. 'We wanted practical activities where

participants could enjoy themselves and have fun – and the facilitators could too. So our session on managing a tenancy is based on a giant game of Snakes and Ladders.'

Do participants find this childish? Far from it. They learn that climbing the ladder to getting a tenancy isn't the end of the story – loud parties may well mean you slip straight down into eviction! 'Our young participants were surprised at how much they could learn from a game,' remarked Lynda. 'Sometimes games are where real learning takes place.'

Budgets and burgers

It isn't all games. One young person came in because she was about to be evicted from her tenancy for rent arrears. Managing money was simply beyond her. But her rent officer

agreed to defer action if she sought help, and at Project 101 she learned to create a repayment schedule and build up budgeting skills. Result: she's still in her flat.

The resource pack which provides the backbone of the sessions includes topics like furnishing a flat, paying bills, benefits and grants, safety at home, and cooking on a budget – on less money than a fry-up at the chippie. Lynda commented, 'What makes it really special for us is we know we're helping real people. Seeing the difference in them before and after is wonderful.'

Contact Project 101 in Kirkintilloch on 0141 578 0282

Double Success

Carr-Gomm Scotland is aiming at success. Now it has achieved not one success but two.

Founded to help older people in making housing support choices, Carr-Gomm's first success was its project in Glasgow's Mount Florida area where it currently provides a person-centred service. With a care package focused around the wishes of the user, Carr-Gomm makes sure older people are supported in their homes right to the ends of their lives. By keeping a tenancy agreement with New Gorbals Housing Association, Carr-Gomm's service users do not have to leave home to get the care they need. They can now remain at home if they choose, close to family, friends

and community, leading active and independent lives.

Then Carr-Gomm was commissioned in August last summer by Glasgow City Council's social work services to open a similar project for older people in the Gorbals area of the city, using Supporting People funding. 'There was a great feeling of celebration,' the agency reported, 'as we knew that the [first] project enjoys great success.'

Part of the reason Carr-Gomm works so well is their focus on working with other service providers such as

community nurses, social work, housing personnel and GPs to support people in an imaginative way. They help clients take holidays or enjoy outings to the theatre. They recognise how vital it is to give people chances to get out and about and meet new friends. 'This method of joint working has proven to be a recipe for success,' the agency states. 'Because of our close working relationship with colleagues in other agencies we are able to support people in the things which we all value in our own lives.'

‘Lives Behind Labels’

‘Without Supporting People Funding it would have been difficult to get support from LinkLiving. But what is most important is that my family and friends would not have had the chance to get to know the real me and not just my illness. I am a real person with a lot to give. Supporting People funding has given me this opportunity... don’t take it away.’

These are the words of a service user at LinkLiving, a voluntary organisation supporting people in Fife, Edinburgh, Mid and East Lothian and Falkirk, faced with news of budget cuts. LinkLiving became concerned about Supporting People Funding programme reductions. But instead of responding with panic, the organisation decided to invite everyone they supported along to an information meeting to discuss and understand the issue.

The result, one year on, was a moving booklet and film.

‘Lives Behind Labels’ was launched at the Scottish Parliament on 26 January, sponsored by Sarah Boyack

MSP. Sue Tate, Service User Involvement Co-ordinator at LinkLiving, commented: ‘The film and booklet are a celebration of support. Supporting People funding has made an enormous difference to people’s lives. It has committed resources to vulnerable people so they can become valued citizens. The film and booklet contain stories about people who have turned their lives around with the help of this support.’

‘Just knowing someone is there for me, it makes a difference,’ wrote one. ‘I’ve got support. We work together as a team. I’m much more confident now. I take each day as it comes. Just be happy!’

‘Will funding reductions reduce services that truly support people to live independently?’ asked David White, a service user at LinkLiving. ‘These stories show what Supporting People has meant to real people.’

For a copy of the dvd or booklet contact LinkLiving on 0131 557 0350 or Linkliving@linkhalt.co.uk

Troubleshooting Team: The SP Forum

They’ve met now for over three years. Heated discussion and vital issues characterise their meetings.

About 18 sit around the table, all from different stakeholder agencies, councils, housing associations, commissions and government bodies involved in service delivery of Housing Support to service users. Who are these people?

Meet the Supporting People Forum. Convened quarterly, the group act as troubleshooters to discuss and resolve difficulties that arise between service providers and local authorities in providing Supporting People services. They deal with, among other issues:

- ❖ pipeline funding and inflation concerns
- ❖ carry forwards and whether they are ‘grossly unfair’ or not
- ❖ joint services and efficiency
- ❖ impact on individuals of SP efficiency savings
- ❖ guidance on service reviews
- ❖ contracts for service users.

Where else would all these protagonists get together? Sometimes discussions are slightly heated but each meeting has ended with greater understanding and has encouraged that most valuable of commodities, day-to-day contacts.

So do we need to keep the Forum going? This question was recently put to members, who sent back an overwhelming yes. While service reviews, Care Commission inspections and full contracts are important issues for all, the group feels the opportunity to get together and thrash out problems face to face is the most valuable thing of all.

Ownership Options

An independent charity, and a source of information and support in Edinburgh for disabled people who aim to find the right place to live by buying their own homes, Ownership Options plans to go on changing lives. We spoke to Richard Hamer, Ownership Options Director, about the impact of timely support on real people. He told us Helen's story...

Once upon a time

Helen, 43, lived in a privately rented two-storey house. Helen had a happy life, but she had particular problems to deal with. Helen had epilepsy, cerebral palsy and severe learning difficulties. She also found it difficult to walk and move around. Her food intolerances required regular advice on food preparation and assistance with shopping. However, Helen got support through a 24-hour care package supplemented by general support and befriending under the Supporting People programme.

Helen's home had had minor adaptations recommended in an initial assessment by an occupational therapist. But one day she found she could no longer manage the stairs. Social Services came to assess her needs and agreed she now needed a ground floor flat with an extra bedroom for her live-in carer. But this was where the problems began.

Moving to another private rented property wouldn't work and no suitable council or housing association properties were available. However, help was on the horizon. Helen's brother Craig, who had always stood by her, stepped into the picture. He had always advised her on her financial affairs and decided to give Ownership Options a call to see if there were ideas neither of them had explored. Craig mentioned Helen's savings of £5000, wondering if it might go towards purchase of a house.

The Ownership Options team realised that since Helen was in receipt of Income Support, she could qualify for assistance with a mortgage for a more suitable property, due to her disability, through Income Support Mortgage Interest Payments. But they found houses in Helen's area would cost around £100,000 and the maximum offered by lenders would not fully cover Helen's cost. So Ownership Options agreed to apply on



Ownership Options Team

Helen's behalf for extra assistance through the Special Needs Capital Grant available through Communities Scotland for disabled people who can demonstrate a clear need to move, supported by their occupational therapist or housing support worker.

Happy endings

Craig and Helen have now agreed house purchase is the best option and have started to look for suitable properties in the area Helen knows best. The Ownership Options team have made sure Helen's existing housing support package can move with her, using the flexibility of Supporting People funding. And Helen now looks forward to owning her first home.

The House Key – Launch of a New Directory

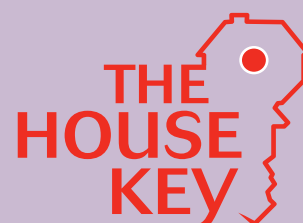
What is the thing that gives you access to your home? It's your house key. And that is the name given by the Scottish Executive to its new online Scottish Directory of Housing Support Services. Its purpose is to give professionals and the general public alike access to quality information on all the different services currently listed as giving housing support in Scotland.

Offered as part of the Executive's Communications Strategy, this electronic directory lists over 7000 services. They include services giving support in the home and in all types of sheltered housing. In the House Key you can find details for every area of Scotland on service, location, current availability – even whether or not pets are welcome! Information will be regularly updated and also includes organisations who do not receive Supporting People funding.



Keeping directory information up to date is essential, so if your organisation appears in its listings, please send your latest amendments to john@e-a-c.demon.co.uk

For anyone who needs information about the housing support necessary to create or sustain an independent life, the House Key is a must. Access it at thehousekey.org



Scottish Directory
of Housing Support
Services

Happy to Translate

The Scottish Executive and Communities Scotland are funding a new initiative that aims to help bridge the communication gap for people who have difficulty speaking or reading English. The initiative is being developed to help improve the quality of service to people in Scotland who speak or read little or no English or who use a non-verbal language.

The 'Happy to Translate' logo was carefully chosen. It symbolises communication between two people who do not share a common language. The new logo was picked by communities across the country in a survey where they were asked to choose from a number of options. Organisations will display the 'Happy to Translate' logo to tell people that they provide language assistance in the form of confidential translation and interpretation.

When a customer who speaks or reads little or no English visits an organisation displaying the 'Happy to Translate' logo, a member of staff will follow a few simple steps to determine what language the customer prefers to use, and what information or services they require. An appointment will then be made on the customer's behalf with a professional interpreter, or arrangements made for documents to be translated into the appropriate language.



Malcolm Chisholm, MSP

Several public organisations are piloting the 'Happy to Translate' logo over the next two years. The first group includes Trust, Hanover (Scotland) and Bield Housing Association, NHS Lothian, selected departments within the City of Edinburgh Council, Lothian and Borders Police and The Moray Council. When the pilot phase finishes, other organisations will be encouraged to apply for membership to use the 'Happy to Translate' logo.

For more information go to the website:
www.happytotranslate.com

Have your say!

This newsletter is also available on the Supporting People website (address below).

Let us know what you think of the site and this newsletter.

If you have an example of working practice that would make good news or have any ideas on Supporting People communications, send your comments and ideas to

Email: supportingpeople@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

You can contact the Scottish Executive or request additional copies of this newsletter from the Supporting team at:

Regeneration, Fuel Poverty and Supporting People,
1-G, Victoria Quay, Edinburgh EH6 6QQ.

Telephone: 0131-244 5522 Fax: 0131-244 5529

Email: supportingpeople@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

This publication is available on request in large print, Braille or audio cassette format and languages other than English.

www.scotland.gov.uk/housing/supportingpeople/