



BRIGHTLIFE LEGACY REPORT
8. BRIGHTLIFE EVALUATION:
BRIGHTLIFE PARTICIPANT
REPORT
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*Evaluation
status report*

The University of Chester Evaluation Team

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8. Brightlife Evaluation: Brightlife Participant Report

Executive Summary

This summary reports on the experience of individuals who have completed the first round of Brightlife commissioned activities and the impact these activities have had on socially isolated older people, aged 50 and over, in Cheshire West and Chester.

Fifteen individuals who had taken part in Brightlife commissioned activities and completed a Common Measurement Framework questionnaire were invited by Brightlife to provide feedback through one-to-one interviews. Of the fifteen Brightlife participants, semi-structured interviews were conducted with eight participants who responded to the invitation and gave informed consent to participate. Thematic analysis was used to search for, identify and review patterns across all interviews.

Five main themes emerged from the analysis of the interviews:

Target group

- Research findings suggest a clear distinction between participants in the younger age bracket of under 65 years (cohort 1) and those in the older age bracket of over 65 years (cohort 2).
- Cohort 1 participants did not view themselves as belonging to the Brightlife target group as they were fairly active and socially connected.
- Cohort 2 participants identified as lonely and needing social interaction more in comparison to Cohort 1 participants.
- Participants acknowledged the difficulty in reaching and engaging those most at risk of isolation and loneliness.

Engagement with Brightlife activities

- Cohort 1 expressed an interest in learning new skills, developing new hobbies/interests and maintaining an active lifestyle.
- Cohort 2 preferred socialising particularly if they had suffered a bereavement or ill health.
- Barriers to engagement were reluctance and anxiety associated with joining a new group, lack of transport and sustainability of activities once funding stopped.

Feedback on activities commissioned

- Participants were generally positive regarding their experiences and commented on quality of activities, professionalism and dedication of staff.
- There was a wide range of activities such as social 'clubs', exercise groups, creative writing, bee keeping, art and craft classes.
- There were particular activities, for example, birdwatching and organised walks that proved challenging for some participants. In such cases, participants had to be sign-posted to more suitable activities like NHS walks.

- Lack of clarity over ownership of activities: participants reported not being able to distinguish between Brightlife commissioned and signposted activities.

Impact on Participants

- Improved social contact was reported by participants.
- The most commonly reported benefit by Cohort 1 participants was gaining new skills and knowledge.
- Cohort 2 participants mostly reported physical health benefits, improved mental well-being, self-esteem and confidence.

Considerations for Brightlife

- Extending advertising to health and social care workers for example; community nurses and social workers.
- Involving participants in suggesting possible future activities.
- Developing sustainability plans.
- Innovative transport solutions to reduce barriers for older people accessing activities.
- Encouraging commissioned providers to develop current participants into volunteers.

Recommendations

For Brightlife:

- to consider a wider range of activities suitable for ranging abilities and interests across the 50+ population
- to extend their 'advertising' to community health workers visiting socially isolated people within CWAC
- to encourage commissioned providers to train experienced participants to take on small volunteer roles

For consideration to be given to:

- Sustainability of activities once a commissioned activity has been completed
- Coverage of transport to reduce barriers for SPPs accessing activities
- Existing participants to have more involvement in suggesting future activities

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