



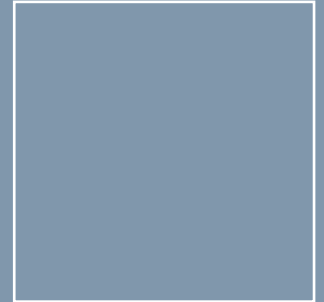
The Generation Project

Review 2005



The Generation Project

Foreword by Veronica Powell

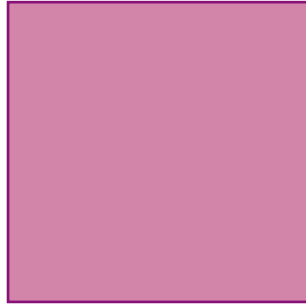


Sometime ago Care and Repair contacted me through NDC to help set up an organization to help and support the over 50's. I was asked to help with interviews to staff such a project and this took place and the two employees were selected to take this project forward. Graham took responsibility to visit or interview people who were having difficulty filling in forms and needed some advice and guidance to do this which requires him to visit people in their homes or interviewing them in the office and I understand that he is kept well occupied doing this. He also visits sheltered housing accommodation meeting groups and advising on their current problems.

Mandy has the responsibility of keeping records, holding meetings of people who are prepared to come together as a committee to take the project forward. She informs us of any new initiatives with regard to housing and care of the over 50's. A resident Chairperson and appropriate officers i.e. Secretary and Treasurer have formed a Group and a bank account has been opened. Mandy has also arranged visits to other areas where older people have got together to support one another and be aware of possibilities to improve lives of the over 50's.

So far all is going according to plan and as a group we attended the Pensioner's Convention at Blackpool last year and Mandy arranges Hot Pot lunches at various venues so that people get together and are kept informed of any activities and information relating to their situation. Mandy also invites people from similar projects nationally to share their experiences. The project is doing very well and hopefully the funding will be in place to continue this excellent service.

Veronica Powell



Introduction

by Maggie Walker
Director of Manchester Care & Repair

The Generation Project is an advocacy and information project for older people in the regeneration area of East Manchester. It is managed independently by Manchester Care & Repair. The idea for the Project came from people working locally who had come together to look at the well-being needs of older people. The money has been provided by the regeneration funds for East Manchester (Beacons for a Brighter future - SRB and New Deal for Communities). Local older people and the staff employed to deliver the Project have made it the success it has become.

Manchester Care & Repair is a local voluntary organisation providing support and services to older people related to home repairs. We find that information and advocacy are key to the well-being of older people. We also know that older people themselves have often said how much they need appropriate independent information and that they want to be listened to. We became involved in the older people's well-being group in East Manchester. This eventually led on to our successful tender to provide the information and advocacy service now known as the Generation Project.

When the Project was getting started we were asking older people locally their views and what information and services they wanted. We found that many people we spoke to told us about the improvements they wanted to see for their children and grand-children. We had to push a bit harder for people to think about what would make life better for them as they became older.

One of the achievements of the Project is that older people and other organisations are now thinking about older

people's needs. There are many ways in which the regeneration impacts on older people. My vision is that older people play a full part in the "new town in the city" that East Manchester will become and that current and new residents see East Manchester as a good place for themselves, and their parents and grandparents, to live in old age.

We are pleased that the Generation Project has the continuing support of the City Council and the Beacons Board. This review shows the innovative and extensive work that two staff members have delivered in one short period and the way in which it has been received and valued locally.



Care & Repair and the Generation Project will continue to work with older people in East Manchester to help to find information, address issues and to ensure that older people are listened to. If we can help you, or you can help us, please do get in touch.



“ The Generation Project is an excellent example of regeneration initiatives taking older people seriously. The Project has worked extensively with statutory agencies and community groups in the Beacons area of East Manchester as an advocate for local older people. The involvement of older people - through the hot pot lunches and the setting up of a local older people’s forum - has been of particular interest to the Valuing Older People initiative. It is informing our city-wide approach to building local networks of services for older people. ”

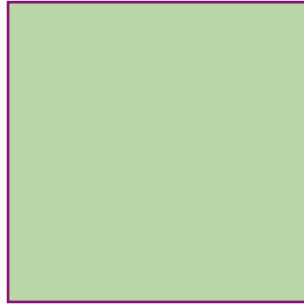
Paul McGarry, Valuing Older People Officer - Manchester City Council

Aims

 Advocacy involves helping people speak up for themselves, communicate their needs and wishes, make informed choices and take more control over their lives 

The Generation Project leaflet

The Generation Project aims to provide an information and advocacy service to older people both individually and collectively. Also to keep partner agencies and service providers informed about older people's experiences and aspirations, so that they can better meet older people's needs.



Structure and Role

// The Generation Project provides free, confidential and impartial information and advocacy for older people in Beswick, Bradford Clayton and Openshaw. The project provides one to one advocacy for older people and consults through hot pot lunches and information days and helps to establish an independent older people's forum in East Manchester. **//**

Older people, already active in the regeneration, helped with recruiting the staff and formed a Reference Group to initially guide the Project.

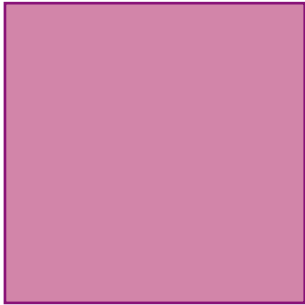
The Project was established with 2 members of staff:

- An Advocacy and Information worker, with the skills to concentrate on advocacy with individuals, and
- A Development and Information worker, to support collective advocacy when several older people face the same issue and to develop the capacity of older people to speak up for themselves and the capacity of local organisations to respond.

It is important for us to have a local base and this has been established conveniently close to the regeneration offices and the market in Beswick.

During the first months of the Project we worked to get ourselves known. This included going to gatherings and meetings of older people e.g. community centres, churches, sheltered housing, residents' groups. We set up a display stand at Health Centres, older people's day centres and the larger supermarkets. We also met with as many groups of staff working in the area as possible, to explain our role as advocates and the way in which we could help them: both by supporting older people and by identifying ways in which their service could better meet older people's needs.

Ongoing accountability is through a quarterly Management Group meeting - formed from some of the organisations that benefit from the Project's learning about older people's views and needs.



Individual Advocacy

Graham Williams
Advocacy and Information worker

Advocacy Case Study 1: The Housing Market Renewal Team (HMRT) referred a couple to the Generation Project because they were having their home compulsory purchased by the Council. The couple decided to rent from a Housing Association - in an area outside of the local authority boundaries - rather than buy another house. The Advocacy Worker liaised with many people on the couple's behalf: solicitor, surveyor, housing staff, HMRT staff, removals firms, utilities companies, benefits agencies etc. The worker obtained the information that the couple needed, talked through their options with them and assisted them with rehousing. This involved visits to the new area, completing application forms, writing supporting letters and arranging removals. They have now settled into their new home.

To date we have provided individual advocacy for 180 people. The support people require varies from information or sign-posting, achieved in one telephone call, to advocacy casework involving many home visits and communications over a long period of time, for example, where local people have been involved in relocation due to housing regeneration.

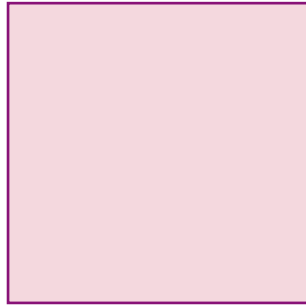
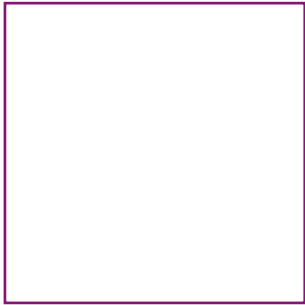
The topic areas of the work have been varied: Consumer Rights, Equipment, and Adaptations, Employment / Volunteering, Social and Care Services, Health Services, Carers issues/rights, Finance / Welfare Rights, Education / Training, Leisure / Social, Transport, Housing (e.g. rehousing, repairs, nuisance, compulsory purchase).

Referrals have also come from a wide variety of sources, including, local people themselves, Housing Associations, Housing Market Renewal Team, Neighbourhood Wardens, CAB, Councillors, Social Services, Health Services, Regeneration Officers, Voluntary Sector and Community Groups.

There has also been links with Salford University: several students, undertaking Social Work training, have visited the Project - one on a 30 day placement. Visits to the homes of local older people have been a part of this work. The students had positive experiences that both challenged their perceptions of older people and made them reconsider working with this group in the future. They were also able to learn more about advocacy work, regeneration and the role of Home Improvement Agencies.

Views on our service

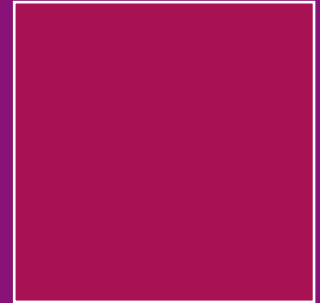
We had a good response to a 'Client Satisfaction and Service Evaluation' survey: 17 out of 48 (35%) responded and all respondents thought that the service was good at 'reliability' and for getting information. Some clients have also contacted us spontaneously to give feedback.



He was very helpful in all our dealings”, “highly informative”, “He helped us not to give up and we got the help – we had been asking for 8 years before that.



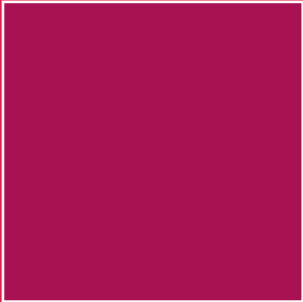
Client Satisfaction and Service Evaluation, March 2004



Advocacy Case Study 2: A Housing Officer referred a man to the Generation Project because he was having difficulties with budgeting. The original work was to set up 'Direct Payments', whereby his bills could be paid directly out of his benefits. During meetings with the man, other 'needs' were identified, which led to other work being carried out, for example, arranging for housing repairs, housing adaptations and the involvement of a mental health support worker. The work entailed advocating with benefits agencies, the landlord, social services and mental health services. As a result of the Project's involvement, the man's finances are more stable, his home is safer and he regularly goes to a day centre, which has improved his mental health.

Collective Advocacy

Mandy Powell
Development and Information worker



To date over 500 local older people have been involved with the Project through its development work.

Various organisations - which work nationally or locally to support older people and give them a voice - have worked with the Project: Valuing Older People (VOP), Better Government for Older People (BGOP), Care and Repair England, Manchester Alliance for Community Care (MACC), Help The Aged, New Philanthropy Capital.

Our development work falls into the following areas of activity with older people:

Helping people speak up for themselves and take more control over their lives

This included drawing in the national organisation, Help the Aged, to work with us and local older people, to establish an independent 'Over Fifties Forum' for the area. Interested individuals, and now the Forum, have been supported in contributing to the 'National Action Plan On Poverty',

attending the 'Pensioners Convention' and contributing to Manchester's 'Valuing Older People' Board.

Communicate their needs and wishes

We have supported older people and local organisations in putting forward the case for a Low Level Support Scheme, in East Manchester.

We have instigated older people's lunchtime meetings - 'Hot Pot Meetings' - where service providers can listen to and provide information to older people and where older people can express their views. More than 35 issues have been raised in this way and communicated to the relevant bodies.

Make informed choices

Approximately 20 agencies and services came together to contribute to an information and consultation event for older people - 'Benefit Your Health Day' - held in Beswick.

We worked with the Housing Market Renewal Team to run a consultation event, specifically for older people, in the regeneration area of Openshaw, as a pilot for other

information and consultation events focusing on older people's needs.

We have initiated Housing Options visits in order to raise awareness of various types of housing, which cater specifically for older people or have facilities that will enhance the lives of older people who live there. These visits aim to inform older people of different types of accommodation, so that they may be better able to contribute to the consultation and development of housing in East Manchester.

Housing options visits:

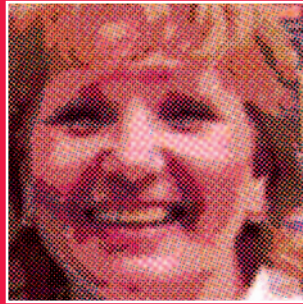
Two groups of older people visited an innovative Retirement village, 'Ryfields', near Warrington. Other visits have been arranged for places in Manchester, Cheshire and Yorkshire.

We researched the impact of regeneration on older people and have been in the forefront of the move to encourage the building of 'Life-time Homes' in Manchester - which is now being included in local policies.



We undertook a feasibility study for a local Low Level Support Scheme, after the need was identified by local residents, and prepared a proposal for funding which has been submitted to local agencies for funding.

The City Council have established a 'Valuing Older People' Board and we have played a key role in looking at the ways in which the strategy can be implemented locally.



Over 50's Forum: This Forum was set up in response to the needs of older people to have a collective voice independent of agencies. A mandate to set up the Forum was given by local people, after holding an open day, attended by over sixty older people: they stated that this was something they wanted to see in their community. Over seventy people requested further information and wanted to be either involved as members of the Forum, become management members and / or become members of an information network. The work of the Generation Project to help structure the Forum will help to provide a sustainable platform for local people for the foreseeable future. The interim Management Committee is made up of local people and they are using the help of the Development Worker at the Generation Project to take this forward.



Information

/// The project is monitored against a detailed set of outputs and outcomes, which are conditions of the funding and to date all these have been met or exceeded. ///

Beacons Best Practice Guide No 1

The Project has worked with other organisations to look at the information available to local older people and others, and we have highlighted older people's need for information on many occasions.



We attend consultation events organised by other agencies and services, for example, the Housing Market Renewal Team and Valuing Older People, to help disseminate information and to ensure older people can put forward their views and get their needs met.

Information is also an important part of events organised by the Project, for example, Ho Pot Meeting, Housing Options events etc.

We have also developed our own information resources – both electronically and paper – which contains material on a wide range of subjects.



Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation is an integral part of the Project's work and has included:

- Client satisfaction questionnaires for individual advocacy
- Review meetings with stakeholders
- Event participant feedback questionnaires
- Participant led evaluation as a part of major events
- Quarterly reports to the management group on outputs and outcomes

A postal questionnaire was carried out with people who had come into contact with the service. This survey showed that providing transport to meetings is highly valued (we have a participation budget which allows us to book taxis for older people to attend our meetings and consultation events). Also highly valued was our commitment to involving older people in planning events and holding events in local venues and allowing time for a chat. The evaluation showed that there is even more that we need to do to reach out to older people: “put more information leaflets through people’s doors”, “advertise more”. It also showed that many older people do know that they can turn to the Generation Project for help with a health or housing issue or other problem.



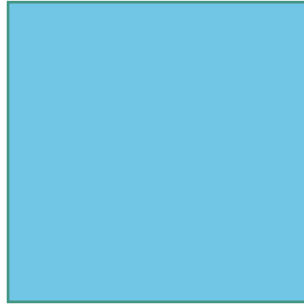
Outcomes

Benefits of the Project that have been identified by older people and others linked to the Project have included:

- Older people having a better knowledge of how to access services
- Older people from the area becoming more involved in issues related to older people's well-being e.g. a number of East Manchester residents applied to join the 'Valuing Older People' Board.
- Better working relationships between agencies working with older people as they meet each other through Generation Project events and activities
- 'Lifetime Homes' appears in a number of the City's strategy documents

- Service providers have a new and effective route to inform and consult older people
- Agencies working with older people have more understanding of older people's needs, wishes and aspirations
- Users of the individual advocacy service have been better able to get their needs met
- East Manchester is the only area of the City currently developing an 'Over Fifties Forum'

The Management Group met in 2004 to look at the learning from the Project and a vision for the future.



Vision

The long-term vision for the Project is to develop a holistic service for people aged 55 years and over in East Manchester. This would encompass a range of services - that have already been identified by local people and local agencies - that help contribute to a healthy or good quality of life in older age and would continue to develop the way in which older people are having a say in the service. A local focus to the work has been an important aspect of its success.

The integration of development work with individual advocacy has been a success, but our impact has been limited by the lack of low-level support services for older people in East Manchester. This is needed to combat isolation, promote mental well-being and to give practical support to people so that they can link into other services that promote and increase well-being. We envisage a befriending service, which is delivered by local people, which will also add to community cohesion, building social capital within the community, highlighting the value that older people bring to the community.

With increased awareness of the Project's services and the roll out of the neighbourhood planning process there will be increased demand for the individual advocacy service. The increased number of referrals should be met by an increase in capacity to deliver an individual advocacy service by increasing the number of workers.

At the same time older residents have stated that they want to continue to be supported to have a say in the Generation Project and in the regeneration in the area and to advocate collectively which supports the need for a Development Worker - to oversee collective advocacy and ensure that older people are included in all aspects of development in their communities, whilst also promoting the priorities that older people recognise as important to their quality of life. Responding to the comments

that the Project should do even more to promote its availability and its events, we would benefit from administrative support.

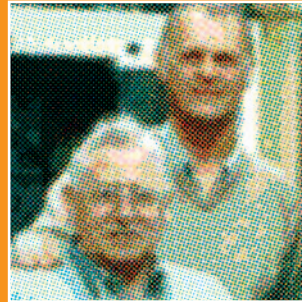
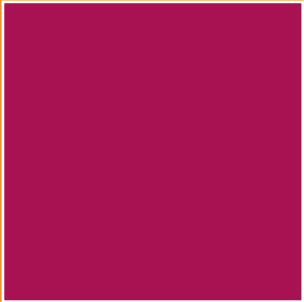
The 'Over Fifties Forum' will provide opportunities for older people to advocate on their own behalf and help to have access to national, regional and local policy makers. The Forum will need development support and resources to back up the considerable voluntary input of its members.

If all the services operate together it will be the start of a local "one stop shop" or joined up service that can support local older people with advice and information and signpost them to other services as well as advocacy.

At the same time the Project retains its commitment to develop the quality of statutory services for older people by:

- helping to develop clear lines of communication to feedback the Project's learning,
- helping make the commitment of all agencies to include older people in service delivery plans reality and
- supporting older people to make their views known.

Looking Ahead



We see many challenges ahead:

- Supporting older people to make their views known
- To gain a genuine commitments from service providers across the voluntary and statutory sector to both recognise and meet the needs of older people.
- To respond to, and develop low level services currently identified by older people locally and nationally.
- To continue to respond to the needs identified by local older people.
- To demonstrate the value of feedback and participation and support genuine consultation.
- To identify approaches that will encourage meaningful involvement of local older people.
- To develop clear lines of communication to feedback older people's experience and help service providers to really include older people in service delivery plans

“ The Generation Project is an excellent example of a service specifically designed to meet the needs of older people. The project has successfully engaged with older people to provide them with advice and information relating to regeneration in their local area. As well as independent advocacy work, the project has made great strides in getting older people involved in a whole range of wider issues within their local area.

There is much that can be learnt from the project by the statutory sector and it is hoped that the project can continue to inform the PCT in developing more meaningful ways of involving older people. ”

Kate Newton, Associate Director of Unscheduled Care





The Generation Project
Bungalow Annex
c/o 187 Grey Mare Lanr
Beswick
Manchester M11 3ND

Office Tel: 0161 230 6789
Referrals Tel: 0161 872 5500
Fax: 0161 230 6655

mpowell@careandrepair-manchester.org.uk
gwilliams@careandrepair-manchester.org.uk

www.careandrepair-manchester.org.uk

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Registered Number: 28333R. Registered Office:
Unit 14, Empress Business Centre, 380 Chester Rd, Manchester M16 9EA