

Project Proposal

You are required to produce a plan of action for a proposed community engagement project for a specified group of learners based on the needs analysis/community profile developed under assignment 1. Your project report should include full details in relation to the structure of the project. It should determine the benefits of the potential project for the chosen group giving due consideration to the relevant organisational factors such as logistical arrangements, facilitation, leadership and funding sources. Your report should also include consideration of how the project will impact upon the chosen group and affect social mobilisation.

PROJECT BRIEF:

The growing number of the elderly population throughout the United Kingdom has placed an ever increasing strain on the UK's National Health Service (NHS). Due to the consistent increase in population, as seen in Figure 1 in the previous report, there is a need for a certain project that can combat the issues caused by loneliness. There are many issues surrounding the elderly population within the UK currently, as the Jo Cox Loneliness report (2017) has provoked the government to appoint a minister for loneliness (BBC News, 2018). The news article describes the UK to have a serious issue with loneliness and states that over 9 million people remain affected, both 'old and young'. The Office of National Statistics (ONS) stated in a 2015 report that the UK is an ageing population and that loneliness was going to become 'more of a problem in the near future' and that the negative impact of loneliness on well-being is considerably higher for the older population as they are more likely to feel lonely (Thomas, 2015). With the prediction of the previously mentioned issues to have come true, the ONS have released a statement in 2018 stating that they will devise a method for measuring loneliness to help UK organisations address the issues (BBC News 2018).

When researching these there were many articles written describing the overwhelming mutual benefits of providing the elderly population with intergenerational relationships, predominantly with young school children. The projects are believed to benefit both parties and promote the well-being of both parties involved.

Due to the recent changes made by the British Government in accordance with the issues surrounding loneliness and isolation, this report will introduce a project that promotes the well being of the elderly population whilst reducing the risks of loneliness by introducing intergenerational relationships within local communities.

PURPOSE OF THE PROJECT: 350

What is the purpose of the project - vision and values?

Vision: To create a project that provides physical, emotional and social benefits to the younger and elderly populations that can be successfully implemented throughout England and Wales. The vision of this proposal is to highlight the issues associated with isolation and loneliness and discuss the appropriate solutions whilst taking into account the benefits of intergenerational relationships.

Goal: To ensure a friendly environment where elderly individuals can feel energised and mentor children of school age in developing new skills. The collaboration of both school staff and elder mentors can provide the children with positive intergenerational relationships on a regular basis whilst also providing the children with the support and

Purpose of the project: To ensure that the elderly generation within the UK are able to actively participate within their communities and form intergenerational links with young children within schools. The collaboration of both elder mentors and school children provide mutual benefits such as breaking down stereotypes that derive from societal separation of the generations whilst also promoting well-being and combating feelings of loneliness.

Specific Objectives:

1. To establish a well managed community project that enables the elderly population to engage with school children and staff within their local community.
2. To ensure adequate safeguarding steps are taken in order for the project to not cause any school rules or safety regulations to lapse.
3. To promote the well-being of the elderly population to combat isolation and feelings of depression or loneliness, therefor reducing strain upon the NHS and local General Practitioners (GPs).

4. To provide children of school age with the opportunity to learn new skills and develop their own perspectives of their elder mentors.
5. To provide accessible placements for elderly individuals who will be participating in projects and implementing a 'pick up, drop off' service where applicable.
6. To promote generative funding for adequate resources to be accessed by schools/ groups in order for the project to benefit the childrens education without adding further strain to already poor school budgets.

SPECIFIC AREAS OF NEEDS

What is the specific area of NEEDS?

The current situation of mental health within the elderly population is growing worse as life expectancy in the UK increases as stated in the previous report. The Mental Health Foundation (2016) stated that the highest rates of depression and anxiety were amongst those of the elderly population within the UK and more so within Wales where the elderly population remains highest within the UK as Figure 1.3 states in the previous report (Baxter and Boyce, 2015). Throughout the following project proposal will be statistical information supporting the need for interventional schemes throughout the UK that offer 'social prescriptions' to combat feelings of loneliness and depression in the elderly population. Although there are schemes that have been created predominantly in England that supply evidence of how intergenerational relationships can combat these issues, this project will specify in some areas the need for Wales to adopt a framework due to the issues highlighted in the previous report by Baxter and Boyce (2015).

As stated in the previous report, the overwhelming amount of budgetary cuts to community and public services has enabled the elderly population within Wales to become vulnerable to isolation (ageingwellinwales.com, 2014) whilst also applying pressure to the NHS. Mark Robinson, chief office of Age UK states that loneliness has proven 'to be worse than smoking 15 cigarettes a day' (cited National Post, 2017) and therefore the UK, in particular Wales, is in need of a solution that can relieve strain on the NHS as this health issue can be resolved through socialisation and intergenerational networking, unlike smoking.

PRESENT CONDITION OF THE PEOPLE

What is the present condition of the people the project is seeking to help?

As the elderly population in England and Wales continues to grow, so do issues that surround loneliness, isolation and low personal well-being. Thomas, J. (2015) stated that elderly individuals who live alone privately are ten times more likely to report feeling of depression or low self worth (p.5). As 28% of households within the UK are single occupancy households and 3.8 million of these households are adults aged 65 years and above, loneliness has become a priority issue for the UK to address (Horscroft, 2017) Adults who live alone are isolated in their houses and suffer from the lack of ability to engage with their communities, particularly if communities do not offer activities for the elderly population to engage with. As can be seen in Appendix 2, the percentage of residents ages 50 and over living alone lies between a minimum of 21.5% to 46.4% in every county (Thomas, 2015).

Donnelly (2017) reports that Simon Stevens, head of the NHS, urged GP's all over the UK to consider prescribing 'lifestyle changes instead of automatically turning to medication'. By providing direct support to elderly people who suffer from feelings of isolation it is possible to reduce the feeling of loneliness or depression by setting up activities within the community that energise patients and enable social interaction. Dixon and Polley of the NHS stated in a 2016 report that 20% of patients visit their GP for what is actually considered a social problem (REPORT OF THE ANNUAL SOCIAL PRESCRIBING NETWORK 2016). By Stevens (cited Donnelly 2017) urging health care professionals to address lifestyle changes as opposed to prescribing the elderly with more education it is clear to see that the NHS is in need of a new outcome that may alleviate some of the pressure it is currently facing. Throughout England there are many organisations that deem themselves as 'Social Prescription Networks' that enable groups of individuals to collaborate and perform tasks in order to combat issues of isolation, whereas in Wales the number of organisations providing this much needed support are incredibly scarce in comparison.

Dai Llyd of the Welsh Government (cited BBC 2017) stated that Wales contains the highest percentage of the elderly population within the UK and therefore the people who are affected by loneliness and isolation are more reliant on social services and suffer delayed and profound consequences. In the same article Michael Phillips of Age Cymru states that the cause of this isolation stems from cut backs in local services such as public transport, community funding and local activities and this enables older people to 'remain trapped in their own homes'.

The Welsh National Assembly (2017) have recognised that loneliness and isolation is one of the most significant issues facing the older generation within the country. The report states that the Welsh Government plans to develop a 'cross-government national approach' to tackle these issues but there are growing concerns as the issue will not be addressed until 2019, 'by which time many Welsh citizens will have experienced adverse effects of loneliness' (p.5). Despite the delay in comparison with England of receiving appropriate framework and funding to combat the issues of isolation and loneliness that often lead to depressive feelings, the report praises the work of volunteers to have assisted with previous intergenerational schemes throughout the UK. Albert Heaney, Director of Social Services and Integration at the Welsh Government is quoted in the report of stating:

"I think also I'd want to reach further and suggest things like, as solutions, thinking around intergenerational schemes so that we're bringing the older generation and the wisdom of the older generation together with the wisdom and the knowledge and the new digital era in terms of young people as well in terms of different opportunities. I think there's something really quite rich that we should consider taking forward in our strategy, especially working, perhaps, across the Older People's Commissioner and the Children's Commissioner as well." (cited National Assembly for Wales, 2017 p.28)

The National Assembly of Wales shows favour to introducing intergenerational schemes to local communities throughout the country in order to not only combat these issues previously stated but to also provide a unique mentoring scheme for young children within schools. There is encouragement from all parties that the trending and yet effective

intergenerational schemes taking part in communities all around the UK to be considered by the government in order to take pressure off the NHS and provide a healthier solution. Heaney discusses an example of how intergenerational schemes can support both the elderly and the young, as not only are the positives outcomes of the schemes mutually beneficial but they also adhere to suggested framework mentioned in a report undergone by the Campaign to End Loneliness (CEL) in 2015 which will be discussed more in-depth further into the report.

EXPECTED ACHIEVEMENTS

What the project is expecting to achieve?

As previously stated, there have been similar projects implemented throughout the UK in the past few years, since loneliness and ageism have become a trending issue throughout the UK. Weale (2017), an education correspondent, stated that providing children and the elderly with opportunities to 'work together' and participate in activities 'that fit within the national curriculum' is beneficial to both parties. Weale also discusses that the project named 'The Downshall Project' can benefit the wider community as well as both participating age groups. Age UK (2017) have approved of the project and have stated that the project has particularly been useful for children to whom English is a second language (ESL) as well as elderly adults who suffer from isolation.

The Age UK Redbridge, Barking & Havering Centre serves locally to where the school is situated and distributes volunteers to assist the older people who visit the school three mornings a week in their interaction with the children. Fenton (2017) states that the project is organised by nine elderly individuals visiting a school three mornings per week accompanied by carers and volunteers of AgeUK. The adults accompany a class of children aged between four and five and 'join in with craft activities, reading and music' and also accompany the children to lunch. According to Dr David Hinchcliffe of the NHS, the project should be duplicated and that projects that promote intergenerational models such as this one are valuable in 'reducing social isolation, loneliness and a risk of relapse' from depressive behaviours (Muntus, 2017)

IMPACT OF THE PROJECTS

What impact/difference will the projects make to the lives of the beneficiaries?

Although there is no evidence or research that can provide an overview of improvement of the well-being of the adults and children involved with The Downshall Project, there is strong evidence provided by AgeUK (2016) that provides an insight into the loneliness risks that were present in the local area of the school in 2016. Appendix 1 shows the 'Loneliness Heat Map' of the local borough of England that accommodates Downshall Primary School. It is clearly evident from the indication key that over two thirds of the population over individuals over the age of 65 are indicated to be of between medium to high risk of suffering from loneliness. Salman (2017) states that the epidemic of loneliness is affecting over 1.2 million of the older population in England alone and therefore the implementation of community projects such as The Downshall Project could create low cost yet great improvements to how loneliness is tackled.

A report published by the 'Campaign to End Loneliness' (CEL) states that there is a need for a specific framework to be put into place to tackle loneliness that comes under four categories such as;

- Foundation Services: that identify and reach out to lonely individuals within the community, also supporting them to utilise local schemes that can enable meaningful connections.
- Gateway Services: introducing schemes that allow elderly people to learn how to utilise technology to stay in contact with peers and family.
- Direct Interventions: supporting individuals to foster new connections and also maintain existing relationships.
- Structural Enablers: using neighbourhood based approaches to tackle ageing issues and promote engagement of community.

(Promising approaches to reducing loneliness and isolation in later life, 2015)

By providing this framework for elderly individuals who suffer from isolation and loneliness, it provides a solid foundation for the new Minister of Loneliness to adapt throughout England and Wales. The Foundation Services are far most important currently and need to

be assessed and provided throughout the UK in order to provide intergenerational schemes on a regular basis to communities in need.

In August 2017, the St Monica Trust and AgeUK teamed up in order to release a television documentary titled the 'Old People's Home for 4 Year Olds' which ran in a similar manner to that of the projects mentioned previously. A group of preschool children aged between 3 and 4 years old would visit a group of pensioners all aged above 65 years for a course of six weeks. Considered a groundbreaking social experiment developed around American based research, this example of direct intervention provides an encouraging framework that allows viewers to see the benefits of intergenerational relationships and also provides an example of how these schemes can be achieved through organisation and require minimum funding (stmonicastrust.org.uk, 2017).

Before both groups began any interaction the elder volunteers were assessed, the base line test on the group of elder showed that they all suffered from low mood, declining physical strength and poor mobility. Participants whom at the beginning of the documentary and quoted to be 'immobile' and 'unable to take part in active play' are seen engaging in physical activity such as games, sports and all manners of play with the children by a week into the scheme. The outcome of the progress showed incredible results that has influenced other established care homes in Bristol to initiate relationships with local schools to provide the residents with similar experiences.

Within Wales there has been only one report of an intergenerational scheme, in February 2017 Plant Parciau nursery in Caernarfon in North Wales set up a social experiment aimed to investigate "the potential for bringing young children and the elderly together to share daycare on a regular basis." (Goddard, 2017). The children were aged between three and four and travelled to a day centre to participate in kinaesthetic activities such as cake-decorating, hat-making, gardening whilst also telling stories and singing Welsh songs. A Dr Williams of Bangor University stated that there was clear improvement in language development for the young children whilst also allowing the children to spend novelty time with older male mentors as the nursery staff were all female. Ackers (cited Goddard, 2017) stated that the benefits are endless for both parties as long as there is structure of what

activities take place and to ensure they are accessible and well thought-out to enable safeguarding for the elders as well as the pupils.

The impact of schemes such as this shows to have fundamental benefits for both children and elders and therefor can have a domino effect with the local community. By creating a simple framework within an organisation that allows for schools to take part and safeguard and also reach out to elders who live alone through face to face contact, with the same enthusiasm intergenerational schemes can enforce a sense of community by energising elders and allowing children to obtain valuable relationships with mentors.

DETAILS OF IMPLEMENTATION

How can the project be implemented to benefit all elders who suffer from loneliness across the UK?

Funding: As most recently in the news Parliament have appointed a Minister for Loneliness, there will be a large campaign launching in early Spring 2018 in order to raise funds and allocate a budget that can combat barriers such as 'transport, health and social care' within our communities (CEL, 2018). Many of the projects previously discussed have been assisted through the help of volunteers who work with organisations and charity partnerships such as AgeUK, CEL, The Red Cross and the Royal Voluntary Service (Asthana 2016) There is no indication from the Department of Education at this time to suggest that school funding will be implemented with oncoming intergenerational schemes. Although there would be no need for additional resources as the elderly participants would be encouraged to engage with play and the available resources that the nursery/pre-school provide in order to assist with learning also.

Location: One consistent benefit of the proposed project is that it is universal in terms of how and where it can implemented. In each three presented intergenerational schemes presented throughout the project there have been three different settings that are accessible in most communities. The Plant Parciau nursesey project in Wales was held within a community centre that was accessible to both parties, whilst the St Monica documentary in Bristol was set primarily in the pensioners care home. Matchett (2017) states that the elderly residents can engage with children in Early Years curriculum activities in a range of

settings and therefor can be carried out both indoors, outdoors or within the school or local day centre.

Safeguarding: As previously mentioned, many older adults who suffer with feelings of isolation and loneliness live alone in private housing. When discussing the details of a project that can be implemented throughout a nation that involves young children there must be safety precautions in place for the vulnerable party. Similarly to the previous project, I suggest either a new or a preferably already established organisation such as the Campaign to End Loneliness to use charity partnerships such as the Co-op and the British Red Cross (BRC) for example to raise money in order to aid the services offered and create a network for elderly individuals who are suffering from loneliness. The Co-operative (2017) state that they are currently funding new services alongside the BRC to assist people of all ages fighting loneliness. By providing advertisement and introducing policies and centres around England and Wales schools can decide to collaborate and partake in the schemes whilst being reassured that the background and general information of the elderly participants safeguards the children from harm.

Transport: The most essential element that will enable the scheme is to ensure that the participants in the scheme who suffer from feeling isolated are able to access the placements that they need. As previously stated, a collaboration of charitable partners who raise money will aid many people who live alone especially. Ideally, a 'pick up and drop off' service would be in place in order to not only help people who are unable to travel alone or drive, but to also introduce a network of support for each individual as projects would take place in locations of proximity. The Government funding that will be introduced this year would also be able to support a percentage of the cost of the service due to the low cost of the overall scheme.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, the schemes highlighted within this proposal state how important it is to assist the elderly population in combating isolation, loneliness and feelings of depression and that the healthier resolution simply involves the organisation of local schemes within

communities that can promote feelings of wellness, happiness, self worth whilst also providing mentors for young children.

Word Count: 3811

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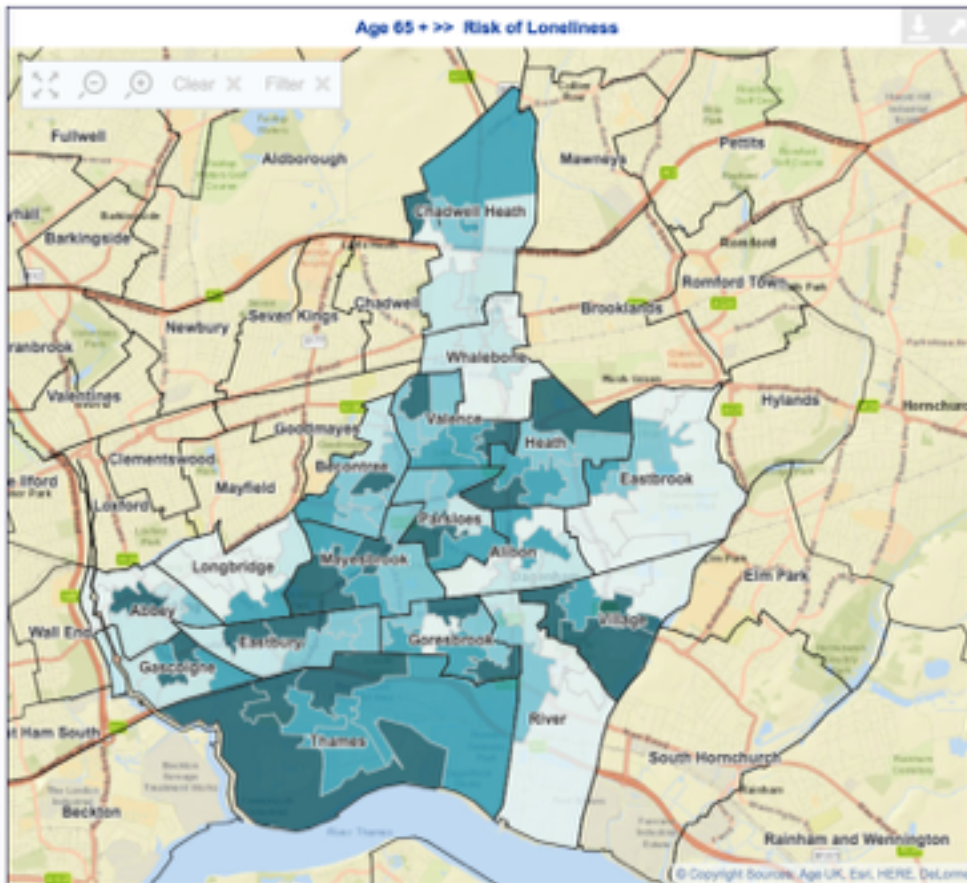
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APPENDICES

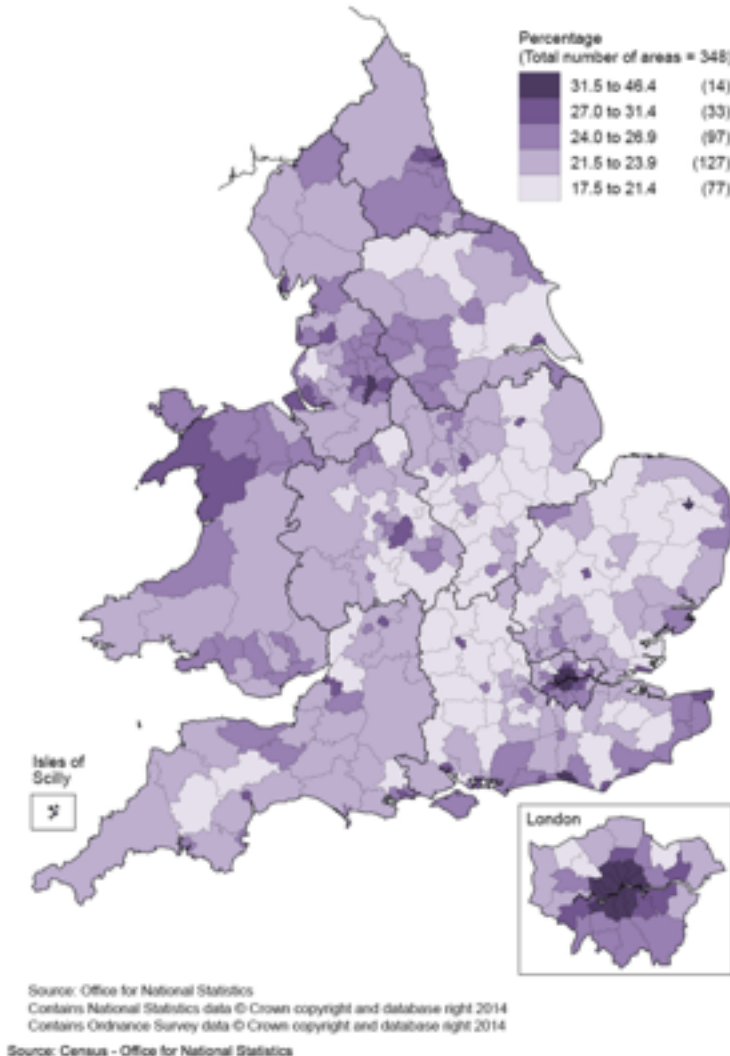
APPENDIX 1.



Appendix 1: AgeUK (2016) present a 'Loneliness Heat Map' with a key throughout England to encourage locals to investigate the lonely population within their communities. This area of England shows the area in which 'The Downshall Project' was executed.

APPENDIX 2.

Map 2: Percentage of the usually resident household population aged 50 and over living alone by local authority district, England and Wales, 2011



("2014 CENSUS ANALYSIS - OFFICE FOR NATIONAL STATISTICS")

A MAP SHOWS THE PERCENTAGE OF ADULTS OVER THE AGE OF 50 LIVING ALONE IN PRIVATE HOUSING THROUGHOUT THE UK. NOTICEABLY IT IS HIGHER IN WALES.