

CONFERENCE ABSTRACT

Co-creating wellbeing and community connections: understanding what matters to older housing residents

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Karen Barrie¹, Ben Hallet², Anne Hendry¹, Mandy Andrew¹, Helen Murdoch²

1: International Centre for Integrated Care, United Kingdom;

2: Hanover Housing Association Scotland, United Kingdom

Introduction: Hanover Scotland Housing Association is exploring ideas and opportunities to enhance the wellbeing, resilience and community connections of older people through a co-production and placed based approach that draws on their residents' strengths and on community assets and relationships.

Methods: Capacity building support and simple tools enabled Hanover staff to participate as 'action co-researchers' in applying relationship centred, collaborative and appreciative methodology with a focus on personal outcomes. Outcome stories were explored through touchpoints cards on aspects of everyday living that 'touch' older people cognitively or emotionally. These map to Nolan's Senses Framework (Security, Belonging, Continuity, Purpose, Achievement and Significance) as key determinants of the subjective and perceptual nature of care in care settings.

Results: Nine staff members were supported to apply simple engagement and data generation methods to undertake staff focus groups and personal outcomes based interviews with 70 residents from 21 housing developments in five areas across Scotland. These insights and the outputs from local community mapping activity are being used to co-create ideas and to test simple ways to build connectedness, increase wellbeing and address the issues that are important to the residents, drawing as appropriate upon individual and community assets. Ideas being tested include intergenerational activity; introduction of therapets; digital buddying to increase the digital skills of residents; an employee volunteering scheme; signposting guides to community activities; learning networks for the development managers; and increasing opportunities for resident led design of the housing facilities.

Discussions: 'Getting out and about' was clearly important to the residents but the most frequently selected touch points were those related to the day to day community within the development: Knowing what's going on; Asking for help when I need it; Spending time with other residents; Thinking about the future and Spending time alone.

Conclusions: Connectedness takes many forms and there are many contributing factors within housing developments as well as within the local community;

Alongside possibilities for wider community connections there is often untapped potential to enhance wellbeing within the housing development community;

There needs to be a sensitive balance between encouraging neighbourliness and respecting privacy and confidentiality of individuals in group living

It is not always feasible for community wellbeing initiatives to be resident-initiated or led, particularly for people who are frail

Lessons learned: The methodology generated rich learning about the patterns and rhythms of life in housing developments and the factors that influence engagement in activities. Participation by varying levels of staff models senior commitment to listening to what matters to residents. Some found it easier than others to adopt outcomes based conversations but all co-researchers can now draw on this rich repository of lived experiences when contemplating service changes.

Limitations: Local context, community relationships, functional abilities of residents, and interpersonal dynamics varies widely between developments. Wellbeing solutions created in one development may not be appropriate or transferable to other sites.

Suggestions for future research: Research on expectations by relatives on the contribution of housing support to community connectedness and wellbeing.

Keywords: housing; older people; connectedness; relationships; assets
