

Learning Snapshot: Community Connectors Time Limited Interventions

Ageing Better is a test and learn programme funded by the National Lottery Community Fund.

We collect information and insights from across 14 partnerships and use this learning to support service deliverers, funders and policy makers working to reduce social isolation in people aged 50+.

This learning snapshot details key findings and recommendations relevant to those working in time limited community connector services.

You can use it as a summary of the full [learning report](#), to share practical tools with colleagues and in teams, or include in your own presentations and briefings.

<p>1. Why focus on community connectors? People aged over 50 are at increased risk of loneliness and social isolation. Community Connectors play a significant role in addressing this; matching or signposting people aged 50+ to support services and activities that can lead to better connected, healthier, and ultimately more fulfilled lives.</p> <p>Time limited intervention services are only available for a fixed period of time. Through our ‘test and learn’ programme we seek to understand the operating models and approaches of Community Connector services delivering positive outcomes for people within this fixed period of time.</p>	<p>2. What are the challenges for time limited community connector services?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commissioners often require a programme remit with a set delivery length. • Time limited interventions have a clear end point so connecting people with the wider community infrastructure beyond the intervention is critical. • Cost-per participant data can be difficult to compare across services because of the varying management structures. • Professional relationships take time to build and referrers (GPs for example) may not refer to a ‘short-term’ project. • Participants don't always relate to the language used by service providers.
<p>4. So what can we do with this learning? By acknowledging the challenges and working with commissioners and participants to co-design services, we can deliver positive outcomes for people.</p> <p>Test and learn from services in your area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a Central Contact Point model to manage referrals well. • Host initial triage calls; setting a project’s remit, timeline and scope of participants. • Use face to face assessments to build relationships and person-centred support. • Keep referral partners informed to encourage joined-up working and better long term outcomes for participants. 	<p>3. How can we overcome these challenges?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build flexibility into the timescale of engagement to accommodate complexities. • Consider ‘time limited’ as the number of sessions rather than weeks/months. • Invest time in building referral links for people who need referring on and for early introductions from GPs and other services. • Support staff, volunteers and participants with clear exit strategies. • Model services using a balance of both staff and volunteers to leverage the full range of skills, insight and demographics. • When promoting services, use the language known to appeal to people.

