"Don’t put yourself in a box, just go out and grab what you can, however you can and enjoy it."

Nicola, TDC Volunteer

“I am so glad you’re out there. I look forward to meeting up with others like me, and it makes a change from Dr’s appointments.”

George, Switchboard Group member
From developing an idea and implementation of a design through to an unparalleled rapid restructure in response to Covid 19, this report details Brighton and Hove’s Ageing Well Service during its first year.

Brighton and Hove’s Ageing Well Service was designed and developed through extensive research and consultation by members of the City Council’s Public Health team, and colleagues within the local Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), and Voluntary Sector. The service was commissioned jointly by Brighton and Hove City Council and the CCG to start on 1st April 2019.

David Brindley Public Health Programme Manager
Ageing Well/Dying Well Brighton and Hove City Council

The contract was awarded in December 2018 to Impact initiatives, an organisation with a track record of developing and delivering innovative services for older people for over 30 years. Their proposal promised an asset-based approach, building on what was strong in the current provision, whilst making radical changes to ensure a co-produced and cohesive service which would be easy to access, fill gaps in and be inclusive to all people in Brighton and Hove aged 50+.

Impact’s proposal was a partnership model with eight other reputable organisations, each bringing a unique offer and contribution to the overall aim of supporting older people to maintain and improve their health and wellbeing.

In its first year Ageing Well has been recognised for its excellence both across the City and at a national level.

What is unique about Ageing Well is that whilst working with a diverse and often complex mix of people, there is a culture of accepting and recognising commonality throughout. Services continually develop and flex to ensure this is embedded and maintained; we ensure everyone is welcome, and able to contribute. We have developed through listening to people on how they feel, what they want and what would make a genuine positive difference to their lives. A solution-focussed approach and peer support flow throughout.

Caroline Ridley CEO
Impact Initiatives
Our aim

The World Health Organisation defines Healthy Ageing as:
The process of developing and maintaining the functional ability that
enables wellbeing in older age. It states that functional ability is about
having the capabilities that enable all people to be and do what they
have reason to value. This includes a person’s ability to:

- Meet their basic needs;
- Learn, grow and make decisions;
- Be mobile;
- Build and maintain relationships;
- Contribute to society

There are currently over 38,000 people aged 65+ in Brighton and Hove
and this is expected to rise by over 30% to over 50,000 by 2030.

We want to support these people to live well in their older age,
enjoy life, and remain independent and able to contribute to their
communities for as long as possible.

To strive towards this, Ageing Well was designed to maintain and improve
health and wellbeing, and be open and accessible to all people aged 50+,
including those identified as most at risk of exclusion, a decline in their
independence and wellbeing, or of being socially isolated. These are:

- Those from the LGBTQ and BAME communities
- People aged 85+
- People living in areas of the city with high levels of deprivation
- People on low incomes
- People living alone

We are working to ensure that all groups and services are welcoming and
feel safe for all, with regular checks to ensure this is maintained. We ensured
there was provision of services and activities in the neighbourhoods with higher
levels of deprivation, and that there was a range of options, including ones that
are free to their users. We have included a service to check people are claiming
all the benefits they are entitled to and that our information is widely available
in both paper and online formats.

To be successful in engaging the right people we needed to be instantly
recognisable as THE place for all older people in the city to get the information
they need, and to find services and activities that are relevant and of interest
to them. Branding and a marketing plan were a key part of the early work,
and resulting success. A consultation with older people about the design
and formats of both printed materials and online information was crucial
to the process.
Year one

A brand was developed which is used across all the services, activities and organisations, and is now widely recognised.

OVER 12,000 POSTCARDS, POSTERS & LEAFLETS
with key information and our contact details were distributed via networks

OVER 4,818 PEOPLE
took part in at least one Ageing Well service or activity

1,963 OF THESE
had not used the service or activity before

217 new befriending matches were set up

166 different activity or interest groups ran through the year

158 older people who identified as LGBTQ took part

190 older people from BAME communities took part

422 PEOPLE
were referred or signposted through the newly developed Single Point Of Contact

48% OF PEOPLE ASKED reported an increase in their health & wellbeing after 3 months

A website and social media were designed, widely promoted and rank highly on google searches

1,601 Make Every Contact Count assessments were carried out

566 PEOPLE volunteered within Ageing Well

270 OF THESE are aged 50+

An additional 9 exercise classes developed including 7 Strength & Balance groups

OVER 1,100 PEOPLE
from areas of the City with high levels of deprivation used the service or activities

The Ageing Well Festival held

103 EVENTS
attended by over

4000 PEOPLE
“It’s been 14 years since I lost my husband. I’ve met some lovely people at the Hop. It makes my life. I don’t know where I’d be without it.

**Grace**, Hop50+ Member

“\nI have clearer ideas about how to make the most of my retirement, keep healthy and continue learning.

**Ali**, HKP Your Life: Your Retirement course attendee

“\nIt’s like CS Lewis said ‘You’re never too old to set another goal or dream a new dream.’

**Dave**, TC Befriending Group Member
Older people told us they wanted to speak to a real person who is patient, understands their needs and is knowledgeable on what is available.

The Ageing Well Single Point of Contact (SPOC) has been developed to ensure people get to the service or activity that is right for them, as quickly and easily as possible.

Brighton and Hove has a wide range of services, activities and opportunities to connect with like-minded others, but finding what is right for an individual is complex, with many factors needing consideration. Evidence tells us getting this right reaps numerous benefits, and the SPOC has achieved this for hundreds of people over its first year of operation.

**Crucial factors affecting the success of the SPOC are:**
- Having a team with the right skills and expertise in place
- Extensive early and ongoing communication and promotion
- Simple contact and referral systems
- Flexibility in what can be offered.
- A solution focussed approach

The team have created a comprehensive database of activities and services across the City that has proved invaluable to us and is now regularly updated and used as a key asset for numerous other professionals.

**Between April 1st 2019 & March 31st 2020 the SPOC worked with 422 people**

Tel: 07770 061072 / 01273 322947  
Email: ageingwellbh@impact-initiatives.org.uk
Identifying the right service or activity can be achieved in just one or two phone calls, yet typically involves conversations taking place over several weeks in order to ensure the individual is confident in whoever they are being referred to, or in where they will be going. Other factors to consider include how the individual will physically get to the destination and what they might expect on arrival (e.g. if someone would be there to welcome them). Investing time at this stage can make the difference between someone finding social connections, getting out and about, and building their health and wellbeing, versus becoming even more isolated and thus deteriorating in mental and physical health.

At the end of the year the SPOC played a crucial role in the City’s response to Covid-19 by quickly adapting to take referrals regarding food supplies directly from the BHCC Community Hub. New systems and processes were set up, along with gathering and disseminating information on options for accessing essential food supplies safely. Through conversations we had with people aimed at ensuring their access to food supplies, we were then able to identify other issues and support people to make further connections and find services and activities which would help them through the pandemic and beyond.

### Transport & travel

A survey carried out with older people in Brighton and Hove in 2016 cited ‘difficulty getting there’ as a major barrier to taking part in activities. A range of transport options based on individuals’ needs was promised and has been delivered. A crucial element of this has been the purchase of a new accessible minibus, which Impact and Hop 50+ customers fundraised for. This was delivered in July 2019, to great acclaim. It is now used across the partnership and has enabled those unable to use public transport to get to groups and also for groups to go further afield to places not accessible or covered by public transport. This has been particularly beneficial to a group of LGBTQ older people who have exclusive use of a countryside woodland space, and for the increased number of befriending groups.

Impact also secured a donation from Uber to cover journeys worth up to £500 a month; this includes their Uber assist and wheelchair journeys, which have enabled people (including people with dementia) to get to activities.

Aligned with Ageing Well’s philosophy of enabling people and supporting independence, we have also worked to support people to make their own journeys, either through lift sharing or through linking people who live close by to walk to activities together. In particular, the support provided through our community development and outreach work helped people to gain the ability to travel independently: we did this by assisting them with figuring out bus routes and times, followed by encouraging them to travel together for the first few times – to help build up confidence.
An expert, busy and effective Information and Advice service has been provided by Age UK in Brighton and Hove for many years. The design of the Ageing Well programme brought the opportunity to review this; we wanted to ensure it was as accessible as possible, to know who was using it and - vital to the ongoing service - who was not using it and why.

The majority of the service has previously been over the telephone or at the Age UK base located at Seven Dials. A key addition that arose from the review has been the development of an outreach service.

To enable more people to access the service, it was agreed that sessions were needed in the East, West and Central areas of the City. This would particularly help those with limited mobility or low confidence in travelling. Pilot sessions took place, making use of small meeting rooms in high street banks. There has been a mixed level of uptake for these, likely due to interruption by Covid-19. Sessions will be hosted in community venues when these re-open. We will promote sessions further ahead and run a mixture of drop-in slots and appointments. Community Development partners will offer support with sourcing venues where they know older people feel safe, and will further promote the sessions through their networks. This will include older people they already work with in their designated neighbourhoods. Support to get to sessions will be provided where needed.

Key issues faced by the service throughout the year have been welfare benefits, social care and housing, which are reflective of the year and issues that have arisen.

Age UK were able to quickly support Brighton and Hove’s Covid-19 response by providing volunteer shoppers and food parcels. A telephone befriending service was also set up to facilitate conversations and thus a link to the outside world.
Ageing well supported

**166 different groups**

across the City

Ageing Well has provided and supported a wide range of activity and interest groups across the City each week, attended by over 2,000 people. This increased as joint working developed along with gaps in provision being identified and filled. Groups ran in a wide range of venues including cafes, The Hop 50+, outdoor spaces and community centres. Groups included art, crafts, discussion groups, play reading, dance and exercise, gardening, cookery and men’s meet-ups.

**Over the first year we have:**
- Increased the number and range of groups
- Increased inclusion and diversity within groups
- Increased specific communities groups
- Increased links into statutory groups e.g. Healthy Lifestyles Team
- Supported more groups to source independent funding
- Developed a range of online groups

By developing groups which are gender-specific and specifically for people from the LGBTQ and BAME communities, we filled gaps in current provision.

The Community Development organisations and Outreach Worker have made links with other providers and small community groups to share promotion, signpost and help people to access whichever best suits their needs. They have also worked with individuals and small groups to raise funds and set up new activities.

Closer working with statutory services has developed, which has encouraged and enabled more people to join and benefit from Strength and Balance classes. We have found that one-to-one support has become closely linked to these group activities: individuals who have joined groups have used the networks they provide to access one-to-one support; this also applies vice-versa. Personal relationships, connections and network-building have been key to ensuring people could access the right support for them.

From March onwards, when Covid-19 forced closure of venues, telephone trees and an online programme attended by over 60 people were developed, along with support for people to get online. These proved invaluable in reducing isolation, with many reporting that they had been a lifeline.
Befriending

Befriending is a mutually rewarding friendship between an older person and volunteer with similar interests, connecting people and generations together who might otherwise not meet. Befriending is proven to be rewarding for all involved and to directly reduce isolation.

Over 500 people benefited from the Befriending services, provided by over 450 volunteers

The one-to-one befriending services developed in line with the service plan to provide further options to reduce loneliness, this was particularly as matched pairs got to know each other and trusting relationships formed. This has included development of befriending groups enabling more people to meet each other and enjoy being out in different environments. These were previously delivered by one of the providers, however, both now provide regular groups in venues across the City, including schools. Both organisations have now completed the Quality in Befriending Award, which ensures standardised quality assurance.

Links with schools and other providers have continued to develop opportunities for intergenerational befriending; these include group visits to woodland sites and schools as well as community centres. The intergenerational aspect of the service has been especially valuable due to shared learning, good fun and mental health benefits experienced by everyone taking part.
The Ageing Well partnership has provided transport for the group activities, with both donated taxi credits and with Impact’s minibus and driver. As this is so cost effective, more groups have been able to run with older people with limited mobility who find it difficult to get out without support, benefitting as a result.

The befriending services provided further training for volunteers to maintain and build on the quality of the services. This has included supporting people with dementia and understanding bereavement.

The nature of the befriending services is such that they were one of the earliest in Ageing Well to be hit by Covid-19. They provided a prompt and comprehensive response to this, setting up telephone befriending with guidance notes for conversations. Demand increased considerably and both organisations were able to recruit additional volunteers and, by extension, found themselves having to innovate in order to ensure all of the required training was provided online, a crucial step taken to ensure both safety and mutual benefits for all parties involved.

“Thank you to the hosts for getting this all together for us. I’m looking forward to coming & having a catch-up with everyone.”

Nancy, HKP 50+
BAME Dinner club member
**Food & Nutrition**

*It is estimated that up to 4,000 older people in Brighton & Hove suffer from undernutrition.*

We know that undernutrition increases the risk of ill health and infections and can result in a longer recovery time from surgery and illness, and increase the risk of frailty.

To address this, an additional service was added to the Ageing Well service in January 2020.

BHFP worked with the CCG Dietitian, Dietetics team at BSUH Hospital and BHCC Public Health team to agree a pathway of support for people experiencing food poverty and/or undernutrition.

The agreed approach focused on developing the skills and confidence of people based in the community: professionals, volunteers and family carers to:

- understand how to spot signs of malnutrition and dehydration;
- to take a prevention first approach, and
- know what to do if concerned about someone.

A visit to meet the Wessex Academic and Health Science Network with colleagues from Public Health and the CCG to learn about their work on malnutrition, including the development of an interactive tool (the Nutrition Wheel), informed the extension of Ageing Well to include specific work aimed at reducing malnutrition and dehydration.

The malnutrition wheel was initially tested with two focus groups of older people, and shared with partners Hangleton and Knoll project, Time to Talk Befriending and Together Co. Feedback from this was then utilised in the development of the planned training.

Alongside this, a pathway of support for people to access food and nutrition options was developed which included shopping options, lunch clubs and meal deliveries.

Covid-19 interrupted the planned development of this service, however, the work became increasingly important as so many were rendered unable to go shopping. We were able to quickly react and support people with accessing online shopping, tasking volunteers to get shopping, and to get meals delivered.
The Ageing Well Festival is unique to Brighton and Hove. Originally known as the Older People’s Festival, it was rebranded this year to promote a more positive image of older people. The AWF is a celebration of ageing and an opportunity for people aged 50+ to take part in events and activities with like-minded people across the City. It raises the visibility of older people in our City, which many largely see as a place for young people. We aim to highlight the contributions made by older people and take this opportunity to portray positive images of people aged 50+.

Having built up an exceptional reputation over five years, more groups than ever wanted to take part this year, more sponsorship was secured and the programme of events was hotly anticipated. We received enquiries from as far afield as Cornwall and Scotland querying how we had gone about producing the festival. The AWF is now an integral fixture in Brighton and Hove’s festival calendar.

in 2019 over 4,000 people took part in over 100 activities

The two-week festival had 100+ events on offer, and provided something for everyone: tours and talks, music and arts events, opportunities to try new physical activities, fashion and ‘feel good’ sessions, along with opportunities to learn new skills and meet like-minded people. Venues included Theatre Royal, Duke of York’s cinema, The Hop 50+, Larches Café, Amex Stadium, Fabrica Gallery, Brighton Table Tennis Club, and Hangleton’s St Richard’s Community Centre. Highlights of AWF 2019 were the opportunity to try a 2 or 3-wheeler electric bike in Preston Park, boat trips to the Rampion Wind Farm, and cabaret evening at The Hop 50+.

Many who took part commented on how much they had enjoyed the wide range of activities on offer and said that they had made new friends. Three people told us they had taken on volunteering roles as a result of attending festival events at Fareshare and the Toy Museum respectively.

ageingwellfestival.org
Health Promotion

Over the course of the year the partnership have provided a co-ordinated approach to key health promotion messages, in line with a calendar of wider local and national campaigns. These have included Sun Safety, Strength and Balance and Winter Warmth campaigns. The organisations within the partnership have trusting relationships with older people from across the City and thereby have additional credibility, as well as direct access to large number of people to whom these campaigns are relevant. This means we are able to strengthen the messages and ensure they are widely understood and acted upon.

Volunteering

"Volunteering can have a positive impact on your mental and physical health. It is also a great way to meet new like-minded people".

Volunteering has been a significant element of the Ageing Well programme, with this being a key part of the offer from many partners. The volunteering has been of notable mutual benefit: services and activities are dependent on volunteers; the volunteers report enhancements to their health and wellbeing arising from their activity with us.

48% of our volunteers are aged 50+ and a significant number oscillate between joining in the activities/services and volunteering, therefore reaping multiple benefits.

Training for volunteers increased over the year, particularly in the befriending services dealing with Bereavement/Loss, Dementia Friends and how to use everyday objects to create meaningful conversations.

Befriending volunteers stated "I get a great sense of wellbeing as a result of helping someone and I’ve had such a positive experience - I can honestly say it’s been so impactful and enriching to my life! I love my visits"

Another said "I don’t know why anyone wouldn’t want to become a befriender"

A volunteer at one of the groups said "I know I have to get up on club days as they need me to take the register"

Another said "I volunteer to help because it is part of my culture and faith that everyone is valued and loved, and we all come together to help each other"
Our Learning

- Sharing expertise, good practice, networks and skills really does bring positive results for the people we work with.

- People will engage in activities given the right approach, support to access them and respect and understanding when they get there.

- Additional benefits are gained through being both a volunteer and service user and there is not always a need to label which part of engagement is which.

- Easily available information on what activities are available and support to get there are crucial to getting more people engaged.

- Older people are willing to take on advice and change habits but this is more likely if it comes from people they know and are like themselves.

- It is a challenge to get hard evidence which proves the difference our services make to people’s lives. We have large amounts of anecdotal evidence from service users and volunteers but the more informal and enabling approach of some of the services is not always compatible with the need to engage people in formal measurement tools.

“I enjoy going to the woods. It lifts my spirits and connects me to nature. It’s good to learn new things too about the plants and trees. I always feel so much better afterwards.”

Mary, TTTB befriending Group member

“It’s been nice to feel like I’m contributing a tiny bit to helping someone.”

Harpreet, Together Co Volunteer
What next

• Year one ended in March 2020 which is when Covid-19 hit hard and will have changed some services indefinitely.

• Year Two will focus on continuing to support older people through these unprecedented times and will combine services set up to meet urgent needs during the pandemic, and moving back to face-to-face support and groups as guidelines allow.

• Year Two will embed the additional food and nutrition work into the service and also increase early intervention work with people with dementia. Previously separately funded services will migrate into Ageing Well, adding a further element to the overall service whilst also ensuring that all services are as dementia-friendly as possible.

• We will work alongside the BHCC Age and Dementia Friendly Communities Coordinator (to be appointed October 2020) to further integrate work across the City.

• Additional training will be delivered for staff and volunteers to ensure diversity across all aspects of Ageing Well.

• Service User involvement will be formalised and embedded in the overall delivery.
Geoff aged 83 Switchboard Older People’s Group Member

Geoff lives alone, he recently went on one of the groups trips to the woodland space they have exclusive use of. Whilst there, he shared that he had been to a funeral. Geoff shared the funeral was his siblings, who he had not seen for 50 years. On the last occasion they met, Geoff revealed he was gay. Their reaction to this was extremely negative, and they went on to denounce him in a homophobic manner to his extended family. There had been no contact since.

The sibling’s family only discovered Geoff’s existence when sorting through their belongings, subsequently notifying him about the funeral. Attending the funeral had been very difficult for Geoff: he had not previously met his nieces and their children before, and he found himself obliged to do the long return drive in one day due to having nowhere to stay overnight. Geoff said attending the funeral had been positive but had left him very shaken and distressed because he felt everyone at the funeral would think of him as a bad person from what they had been told.

Geoff tells us he gains so much from coming along to the Older LGBTQ group as he is accepted for who he is; he enjoys supporting others and having a place to talk openly and honestly about his life. He told us he has never had a place with, “others like me, who understand what I’m talking about, and what I’ve been through.”

Angela aged 70, The Hop 50+ Service User

Angela had been discharged from a mental health hospital following a long period of admission. She was not coping well with being alone at home and was constantly tearful. At her CPN’s suggestion, Angela dropped into The Hop 50+ and had a conversation with the staff. The first visit was key: a staff member explained the service, detailing the activities and great food on offer that afford opportunities for social interaction. Angela agreed to stay for the rest of the day and to visit three times a week from thereon after.

She took a copy of the monthly programme and the staff arranged return transport between her home and The Hop so she could attend art sessions twice a week. This was devised as a short-term intervention due to Angela’s fragile mental health, which prevented her from being able to use public transport; this was a catalyst for building up her confidence, thus enabling her to travel independently in the longer term.

After a couple of weeks of visiting The Hop Angela moved to a care home for respite, and her visits to The Hop became more frequent. She has since made friends with four women who now meet regularly, at The Hop and elsewhere. The resulting boost to Angela’s self-esteem and improvement in mood aided her in moving back to living independently at her flat.

Angela told us, “I came to the Hop at exactly the right time. From the start, everyone was so kind, and coming to the Art sessions, joining the quizzes and making friends have played such a positive part in me feeling so much better. Thank you so much!”

Names have been changed throughout the report to preserve confidentiality.
Most of the time I feel like I don’t count. But my visitor reminds me of the things I have done in my life and reminds me that I did make a difference both to my family and my community.

June, TTTB Befriending scheme member