

Pilmeny Development Project

North East Edinburgh's Older Men's Health & Wellbeing Project

Summary

North East Edinburgh's Older Men's Health & Wellbeing Project provides a vehicle for older (and in some cases vulnerable) men to gain confidence and to begin to re-engage with their local community.

The Community

Leith is an area that has experienced huge changes and now has a very diverse population in terms of ethnicity, income and age. Initial local research carried out with older men by Pilmeny Development Project identified older men's issues as an unmet need. Older men can be a reluctant client group in that they are often unwilling to join groups and to seek support, preferring to try and manage on their own.



The Approach

Pilmeny Development Project uses a community development approach in its work with older people, building the skills and confidence of community members so that they can live independently and avoid being cared for in hospital. Preventative approaches employed by the Older Men's Health & Wellbeing project include:

- Health promotion through a weekly programme of activities – facilitated by Pilmeny staff, the group give each other peer support, confidence and knowledge;
- An evaluation session with users every 3 months or so to see how people are getting on and how the service can be improved;
- Building a sense of belonging, which feeds into and improves members' health and wellbeing; and
- An inclusive environment, with members from diverse backgrounds (e.g. mental health, income, ability, sexuality and ethnicity).

However, Pilmeny's work with the older men is not limited to one self contained project. Importantly, the NE Edinburgh Older Men's Health & Wellbeing Project has been brought together with wider projects, both within Pilmeny and by other agencies. For instance:

- Older men from the group have participated in Pilmeny's intergenerational work, which includes activities involving older service users and young people.
- A joint pilot initiative has brought together members of the Older Men's group with older members of local minority ethnic communities.
- Members can also attend Pilmeny's older people's forums, which enable older people to express their views about services, and have contributed to NHS/local authority consultations.

Results

- Increases confidence, group bonding and sharing of personal issues.
- 47 sessions have been held with a total of 745 attendances – almost double the original target of 441 attendances per year.
- 86 older men from a diverse range of backgrounds are on the database of participants who take part in the monthly programme of events and activities.

Source: Pilmeny Development Project's Annual Report 2010 – 2011

"It was recommended that I come here because I was very isolated and alone then. I didn't want to associate with anybody and I said that men's groups were not for me; that I was just not interested at all. Since then it has basically transformed my life. It really has been an eye opener. It's been a focus for me to get out of the house and to look forward to being with other people"

Member (Older Men's Health & Wellbeing Project)

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