TRANSFORM AGEING

Transform Ageing is a pioneering programme taking a community and design led approach to improve people's experience of ageing.

Bringing together people in later life, social entrepreneurs and public sector leaders, Transform Ageing examines challenges ageing communities in Devon, Torbay, Cornwall and Somerset experience and aims to support social entrepreneurs to develop and deliver innovative products or service solutions to meet these needs.

Over the last three years the programme has demonstrated that combining social entrepreneurship and community action with world class design practice will result in positive change that responds to the challenges of our ageing society.

With funding from the National Lottery, Transform Ageing is being delivered in the south-west of England through a partnership made up of Design Council, UnLtd, South West Academic Health Science Network and the Centre for Ageing Better.

Delivery of the programme has been supported locally by Community Council for Somerset, Devon Communities Together, Torbay Community Development Trust and Volunteer Cornwall.

A recent report from Ipsos MORI and the Centre for Ageing Better found that only a third (30%) of UK adults say they are looking forward to old age. Nearly two thirds (63%) think that old people are not as respected as they should be.

Programme

Why Transform Ageing

A vastly improved life expectancy – one of the great triumphs of the previous century – looks set to be one of the great challenges of this one.

The UK is undergoing a demographic shift that will have far reaching consequences for society, the economy and health and social care provision.

For the first time Britain's over 65s outnumber people under the age of 16. By 2020 the Office of National Statistics predicts that people aged over 50 will account for almost a third (32%) of the workforce and nearly half (47%) of the adult population, with 15.5 million people aged 65 and over. These demographic trends and the resulting impact on public finance are unprecedented.

The implications of an ageing society affect all of us, across generations, and will touch every part of our lives, presenting challenges for individuals, families, communities, employers, service providers and government. Responding to the needs of people in later life is one of society's most crucial and growing issues.

We need to think in a radically different way, using the lived experience of people in later life, collaboration and community engagement to better understand their needs and wants for an improved later life.

It's time for innovative and responsive products and services which tackle the challenges people face as they age.

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One study of 'difficult conversations' undertaken by Independent Age found the most difficult subjects to talk about were 'my preferences for end of life care', 'who will care for me when I'm older' and 'where I would like to live if I can no longer live at home'. While 79% of people thought these conversations were important, less than a quarter had actually had them with family members.

Programme

Designing a better
experience for later life.
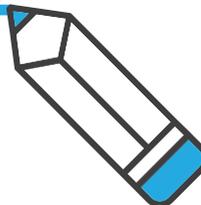
Exploring the Challenge

Adopting a design process based on Design Council's Framework for Innovation – Exploring the Challenge – brought together stakeholders including people in later life to collaboratively understand, in-depth, what people in later life in the south-west need and want, what would improve their experience of ageing and what would make a difference to their day-to-day lives.

Recognising that those with first hand, lived experience provide unique insight, in 2017 we brought together the participants in each location and worked with them using design tools and methods, in groups, on an Ageing Challenge to:

Innovation briefs set out a specific societal challenge (e.g. social isolation and loneliness) that needs to be addressed with an innovative idea or solution.

- remodel the Framework for Innovation so it had relevance to their community

- plan and conduct design research in their community to understand the needs and wants of harder to reach community members

- analyse the findings of the research and identify opportunities to be further explored to help develop Innovation Briefs that explain the challenge in a new way

The research and insight generated through this process was synthesised and consolidated to develop six Innovation Briefs.

COMMUNITY FUND

Combining social entrepreneurship with community action and world class design can drive positive change, responding to the challenges of our ageing society.

01.
Steps to a positive future

How might we enable people in later life to have positive experiences of ageing?

02.
Mobility and transport

How might we enhance independence and well-being through improved mobility?

03.
Life transitions

How might we support people to prepare for life changes?

04.
Caring about carers

How might we support, value and celebrate carers?
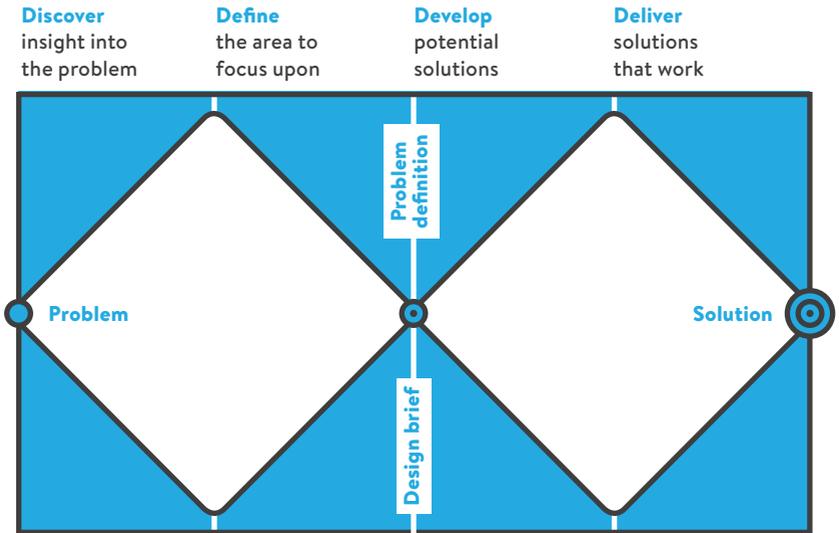
05.
Right information, right time

How might we make information, accessible, relevant and meaningful?

06.
Making connections

How might we create opportunities for people in later life to connect with other people, communities and activities?

To read the six innovation briefs in full visit designcouncil.org.uk/transformageing

Programme

Every design specialism has a different approach and
ways of working, but there are some commonalities
to the creative process. At the Design Council we
like to illustrate this with our Double Diamond model.

Discover
insight into
the problem

Define
the area to
focus upon

Develop
potential
solutions

Deliver
solutions
that work

Problem

Problem definition

Design brief

Solution

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Divided into four distinct phases
– Discover, Define, Develop and
Deliver – the Double Diamond
is a simple visual map of the
design process.

In all creative processes a number
of possible ideas are created
('divergent thinking') before refining
and narrowing down to the best idea

('convergent thinking'), and this can
be represented by a diamond shape.
But the Double Diamond indicates
that this happens twice – once to
confirm the problem definition and
once to create the solution. One of
the greatest mistakes is to omit the
left-hand diamond and end up
solving the wrong problem.

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In order to discover which ideas are best, the creative process is iterative. This means that ideas are developed, tested and refined a number of times, with weak ideas dropped in the process. This cycle is an essential part of good design.

Practical design methods – like user diaries, journey mapping and character profiles – move a project through the four phases of the Double Diamond.

Discover

The first quarter of the Double Diamond model covers the start of the project. Designers try to look at the world in a fresh way, notice new things and gather insights.

Define

The second quarter represents the definition stage, in which designers try to make sense of all the possibilities identified in the Discover phase. Which matters most? Which should we act on first? What is feasible? The goal here is to develop a clear creative brief that frames the fundamental design challenge.

Develop

The third quarter marks a period of development where solutions or concepts are created, prototyped, tested and iterated. This process of trial and error helps designers to improve and refine their ideas.

Deliver

The final quarter of the double diamond model is the delivery stage, where the resulting project (a product, service or environment, for example) is finalised, produced and launched.

The creative process is complicated, making it difficult to capture simply, but this sort of explanation can at least help make it appear a little less mysterious.

Programme
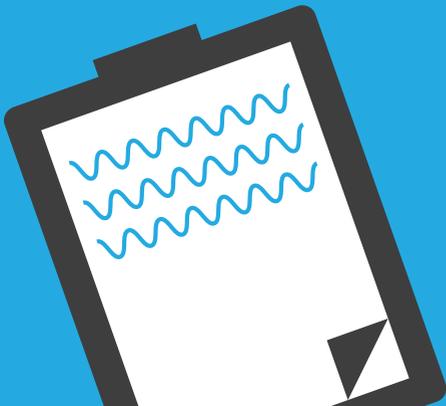
Transform Ageing Guiding principles

Seven concepts applicants were asked to be mindful of when proposing solutions.

Rurality

The south-west region is largely rural, made up of small towns and villages. When designing products and services there is a need to understand the challenges and opportunities people in later life living in these communities face.

Technology

The word 'technology' encompasses a vast range of products and services and means different things to different people. Articulating any use of technology, by showing an understanding of what it could mean to those who could benefit from your product or service was important.

Diversity

People in later life are not one homogenous group – for this purpose we refer to anyone over the age of 50. Age creates some widespread commonalities but people in later life have diverse needs, tastes and abilities. The programme was careful to consider how products or services could be adaptable and personalised, and whether different solutions were needed for different age groups.

Displacement

We have tried to consider the effect any solutions might have on other organisations providing products and services. We wanted to build on what already exists, rather than replicate or replace it.

Strength and resources

Everyone has differing goals, motivation, strengths and resources to draw upon. These qualities are often overlooked by services or products which focus upon deficits and needs. Our interest was in solutions that saw the capabilities in everyone, to increase ambition and build confidence.

Reaching out

Not all of those who might benefit from new products or services would be forthcoming or easily accessible. Delivery partners and developing local connections made have been critical in beginning to reach out into areas not traditionally considered.

Prevention

The programme is interested in solutions that promote preventative approaches to maintain and sustain connections, tackle causes rather than symptoms. To help people be better prepared for both the opportunities and challenges of later life we needed to consider the advantages of prevention as well as solving real, current or perceived problems.

Programme
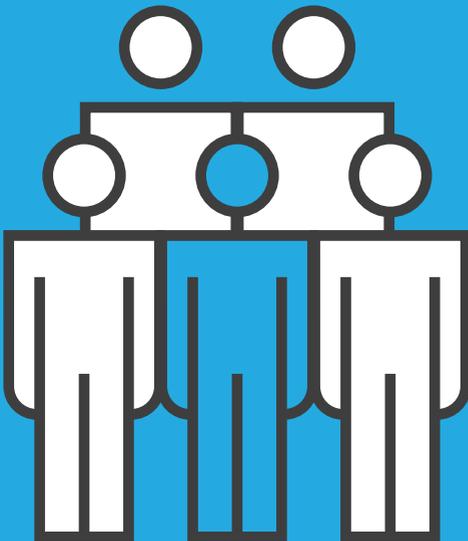
Innovation Briefs

What did we look for

We wanted to hear about great ideas from social entrepreneurs that will help transform the experience of ageing.

The ideas could be new or an expansion of an existing successful idea that responded to one of our innovation briefs.

We wanted to ensure that the best innovations would enhance the lives of people in later life and reach them as quickly as possible.

Ideas that address the innovation briefs

Take time to thoroughly read the six innovation briefs, which begin on page 11 and the additional material produced by the Transform Ageing participants at page 41.

COMMUNITY
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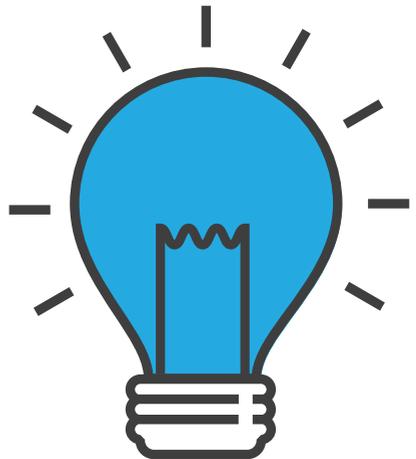
The social entrepreneurs were encouraged to think about how their idea would...

Whatever stage entrepreneurs were at, it was about understanding their plans for growth, both operationally and in terms of social impact, and building on these together.

Create social impact

We wanted to clearly understand the social impact social entrepreneurs would have or were already having with their product or service and how they were measuring their impact. We wanted them think about both the immediate and direct impact of their solution as well as how it might have a wider effect on people and communities.

Ensure growth

Our investment is might have been the start of an idea, or may have had a more specific role in developing and refining a solution.

Be deliverable

It wasn't important every stage was worked out, however we wanted to be confident that entrepreneurs understood the context in which they would implement their idea and that they had the capability to deliver it.

Be innovative

The idea didn't have to be one no-one had seen or heard of before. It might have been working on a solution that already existed but making changes and trying to improve it. We wanted to see ideas which met needs in a different way and stimulated further positive solutions.

Programme

Steps to a positive future

People in later life have positive experiences of ageing.

How might we...

- encourage people in later life to take the first step to becoming more physically and mentally active?

- break down barriers to enable people in later life to have positive experiences of ageing in their communities?

- ensure that services and activities are communicated in a way that helps and encourages people in later life to take the first step to becoming involved?

- build confidence in people in later life to take the first step to use technology that they want to use?

- link the skills, experience and wisdom of people in later life with others in the community (individuals or organisations) to break down the barriers experienced by the socially isolated or lonely?

What's current
What's possible

I feel frightened to go out.
I feel able to leave my home and welcome others in.

I don't feel useful anymore.
Others value my skills and talents.

There are too many barriers to have meaningful relationships with others.
I have meaningful relationships with others.

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After my stroke I had to re-learn how to write. The will to practise was essential

Our research shows that particularly for those that are isolated, taking a first step – be it leaving the home, allowing others into their life, or trying out a new activity for the first time – can be a difficult, isolating and fearful experience.

Barriers can include lack of confidence, fear of the unknown, limited provision or access to information, poor health, affordability, mobility or transport restrictions and lack of connection to the community. We see opportunities to enable people in later life to make one or many 'first steps' that will improve their experience of ageing.

Outcomes we are looking for

- People in later life feel more confident and able to try something new, or re-engage with former interests.

- People in later life have increased physical and emotional wellbeing through becoming more active or engaged in their community.

- People in later life feel better enabled to take steps to participate in everyday informal and community based interaction.

- An increase in reciprocal skills, and knowledge sharing between people in later life and communities.

- People in later life feel their skills, knowledge and experience is recognised and valued.

Things people told us were important

- Often, it's the first step that feels so daunting.

- People can often see steps they want to take, but for many reasons don't take them.

- "Just because I don't want to get involved in clubs, activities and coffee mornings doesn't mean you can write me off."

- A small step can have an immediate impact, or make a significant difference to people lives.

- It's not just about individuals, "as a couple people don't think we need help, but we do not cope well and find it difficult to ask for help."

Programme

Mobility
and transport

Enhancing independence and
wellbeing through improved mobility.

How might we…

- help people in later life stay actively engaged with the community as their mobility changes?
- create opportunities for social interaction through the journeys people make?
- remove mobility or transport as a barrier to independence?
- improve information about travel options that is relevant to an individual's needs?

What's current
What's possible

Services are out of my reach.
Services are now accessible.

I am reluctant to go out.
I am confident leaving my home.

I feel I've lost my independence and my spontaneity.
Good mobility and transport gives me freedom.

Reduced mobility means doing simple tasks is a challenge.
It's easier to do things for myself.

Mobility is my issue... I can't do anything on my own anymore

Loss of mobility has a huge impact on people's lives. Having a fall or experiencing reduced mobility can leave people in later life feeling afraid or unable to go out and do things on their own terms. Simple tasks that others take for granted, for some become impossible.

Our research shows that people in later life are significant users of public transport, but it can be unaffordable, infrequent, inaccessible and often absent, particularly in rural areas, where the distances travelled to access services can be significant.

We were told about the impact this loss of independence had on their lives, both emotionally and practically. For many it was the cause of social isolation.

We see opportunities to provide people in later life with products and services they want and need, that reduce either the impact of reduced or poor mobility or the challenges posed by transport constraints.

Outcomes we are looking for

- People in later life with reduced mobility experience an improved quality of life.

- People in later life are able to remain independent and carry out their daily activities.

- People in later life feel more confident to make spontaneous decisions to leave their home.

- People in later life feel that transport or mobility is less of a barrier to accessing the places, products and services they need or want.

- People in later life have more opportunity for social connection through journeys they make.

Things people told us were important

- "It is the gaps that matter – if I can't get to the bus stop I can't catch the bus."

- Barriers to mobility take many forms from physical access to worry or concern about making a journey.

- New solutions need to build on and not replicate what already exists.

- People value the social connection they find while using public transport.

Programme

Life Transitions

Innovation brief —03

Supporting people to prepare for life changes.

How might we…

- help people in later life to remain active as their minds and bodies change?

- help people in later life to more confidently transition from finishing work into new stages in their life?

- help people in later life and their families with planning for and adapting to significant life transitions, including death, dying and bereavement.

What's current
What's possible

I feel isolated and alone when I experience life changes.
I feel secure and supported in the life changes I am experiencing.

I feel unprepared for significant life transitions.
I feel equipped to deal with significant life transitions.

I feel dependent on others.
I am as self-reliant and connected as I want to be.

I am unhappy with who I am now.
I am happy with who I am now.

Transition is often more about unlearning than learning

Life transitions are an inevitable part of ageing and they take many forms. For some this creates more free time, resource or opportunities. For others transitions may be a negative experience such as the loss of a driver's license, the end of fulfilling employment, a new medical condition or the loss of a loved one.

Our research shows that everyone experiences life transitions differently – something that is a small change for some can be a significant change for others.

The nature of life transitions means that sometimes they are anticipated, such as retirement, while at other times they are unexpected, such as sudden ill-health. They may also happen at any age.

We see opportunities to enable people in later life to be better prepared to cope with these changes.

Outcomes we are looking for

- People in later life have improved networks and connections to support them with changes in their life.

- People in later life have improved confidence and resilience in dealing with life transitions.

- People in later life have better support following sudden or significant life changes.

Things people told us were important

- It is often difficult to talk about preferences for care or death, dying or bereavement.

- When leaving hospital or a service, people in later life need to feel better supported with this transition.

- People in later life want to stay active, in both mind and body, during and following life transitions.

- People in later life do not want to lose important connections during or following life transitions.

Programme

Caring about carers

**Innovation
brief —04**

Supporting, valuing and celebrating carers.

How might we...

- better support carers on their journeys?
- build help and support from friends, family and the community (individuals or organisations) to better support carers?
- work with carers, and the cared for, to avoid reaching crisis?
- better support carers to sustain their personal and /or professional interests and social networks?

What's current
What's possible

I am lonely and isolated.
I feel supported and have connections.

I don't have the information I need.
I am able to access information readily.

I am overwhelmed by responsibility.
I feel confident in the care I am providing.

I have no support.
I know where to find, and how to access support if I need it.

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Whatever happens, he wants to stay at home and won't have anyone else.

A vast number of people provide informal care and caring is increasingly becoming a long-term commitment, with 60% of carers providing care for over five years.

For some people taking on a caring role is a gradual process and a number of people told us they did not identify themselves with being a carer as it happened over time. By comparison, some people become carers almost overnight due to a sudden health issue.

Many carers told us they did not have the information, support or training they need. Carers felt they are often just left to get on with it and sometimes experience financial hardship and social isolation as a result.

We heard from many people about the huge personal sacrifices they had made which left them suffering from exhaustion, illness and depression. The impact on their relationship with the loved one that they care for was also in some cases negatively affected. The loss of opportunities to maintain social connections and a life outside the home can also be severely curtailed.

Many carers told us of the void in their lives when the person they cared for had died. They had lost the strands of their previous life and personal identity and encountered huge barriers in re-building their life, due to loss of confidence and connections.

We see opportunities to support, celebrate and value carers.

Outcomes we are looking for

- Carers have improved health and wellbeing.
- Carers have increased access to products and services which support them in their caring roles.
- Carers have improved access to mutual support and peer learning
- Carers have an increased sense of identity and self-worth.
- Carers are better prepared for life after a caring role.

Things people told us were important

- Connecting with carers when they first take on the role.
- Carers all have different circumstances, not all live with the cared for and some share the role with other family members or paid carers.
- Many carers have health problems themselves.
- Consideration needs to be given to the cared for as well as the carer.

Programme

Right information, right time

Making information accessible, relevant and meaningful.

How might we...

- present information in formats (written, digital, face to face) that makes it accessible and useful?

- make sure that the information which matters most to someone is available when they need it?

- unlock and share information that is currently hidden in the heads, experiences and data-sets of others?

- enable those with previous experience and knowledge to share it with others?

What's current
What's possible

Services are confusing and difficult to navigate.
Services are clear and easy to navigate.

Activities are difficult to find out about.
Activities are communicated in an accessible way.

Individuals feel excluded from what's happening in their community.
Individuals feel equipped to participate in their community.

I don't know what I need to know.
I have the information I need.

If you don't know what to look for how can you find it?

Poor information can result in misunderstandings, delays in service provision and negative experiences.

Many people told us of their frustration in not knowing "what is available and out there."

Whether it is better information when leaving hospital, accessing local transport or trying out a new activity, not knowing what is available – or finding out at the wrong time – often causes considerable concern or anxiety.

For those supporting their loved ones, a lack of clarity over what is on offer can be frustrating, costly and can leave people feeling powerless to offer their support or access help.

Not knowing what skills and assets exist in communities leaves some people unaware of the opportunities and support that exists locally.

We see opportunities to put the right information in the hands of those who need it, at the right time, enabling the right support to reach individuals, families and communities.

Outcomes we are looking for

- People in later life feel supported at the right time with the right information.
- People in later life have the support they need earlier to make the decisions they need or want to.
- People in later life know how to readily access information that is relevant to them.
- People in later life have the right information to enable them to participate in community activities.

Things people told us were important

- Not everyone wants to, or is able to, access information online.
- The impact of poor, misleading or even absent information is confusing, frustrating and can be isolating.
- People don't know what they don't know!
- People need to be given positive proactive information to support their health and wellbeing before reaching crisis point.

Programme

Making connections

**Innovation
brief —06**

Creating opportunities for people in later life to connect with other people, communities and activities.

How might we...

- enable people to feel confident, safe and inspired to make new connections in their daily life?

- design new and creative ways to connect people with one another that meet their individual needs and interests?

- create connected communities, enabling different generations to understand, enjoy and support one another?

- enable people to make meaningful contributions to their community?

What's current
What's possible

I don't have the confidence to join in.
I can choose when I want to have company.

I feel unable to contribute.
I contribute to community life.

I have no idea what is going on locally.
I am informed and enjoy being part of my community.

I don't know where to start with making new friends.
I am confident making new friends.

I don't have proper conversations anymore. Does shouting at the telly count?

The impact of social isolation and loneliness on physical and mental health is well established. That social isolation has the equivalent health impact to smoking 15 cigarettes a day* is an often-quoted statistic.

While age itself does not directly increase levels of loneliness, our community research showed that people in later life often felt isolated, anxious and even depressed because of loneliness.

Others did not necessarily convey that they were lonely but were simply unsure of how to make connections or lacked the confidence to do so.

We found that people in later life were often keen to be active in their community by engaging and sharing their skills and life experience but they didn't know how or where to start.

We see opportunities to support people in later life to make the meaningful connections they need and want.

Outcomes we are looking for

- People in later life have choices about who to reach out to if they feel lonely or need support or connection.

- People in later life are more confident to use technology that can help them connect with others.

- People in later life feel more able to contribute and have an active role in their community.

- People in later life experience more opportunities for casual and informal interactions in their day-to-day life.

Things people told us were important

- Acting before people become isolated.

- Communities of interest create a focus for connecting.

- Technology can help but not everyone will use it.

- Maintaining connections and re-connecting is important.

- It takes confidence to connect.

Programme

Supporting social entrepreneurs

The social entrepreneurs accepted onto the programme received a package of both financial and non-financial support from UnLtd, the foundation for social entrepreneurs. This support is designed to increase the sustainability, growth and ultimately the impact generated by the entrepreneur's social venture.

The non-financial support was tailored to the needs of each entrepreneur and their stage of growth. Support has been provided on business planning, replication, design thinking, network building, financial modelling, legal support, sales coaching, investment raising, prototyping, branding and marketing.

The support aimed to develop social entrepreneurs' confidence and skills to act for social good, to develop their social venture, as well as enabling them to work with their beneficiaries to co-design and test better solutions to transform ageing.

In total £822,500 in funding was available to social entrepreneurs. The funding was designed to meet the needs at each stage of the social ventures' growth journey.

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Scale it awards

Offered funding of up to £50,000 into relatively established social ventures. This funding was designed to help replicate or scale the venture with the funding often used to leverage in additional external investment.

Grow it awards

Offered funding of up to £15,000 to social ventures in the first three years of growth, looking for additional funding to further develop their business, enabling it to grow to a local, regional or national scale.

Do It awards

Offered funding of up to £5,000, with the average award size approximately £2,000. This award was for social entrepreneurs at the early stage of their development looking to deliver and develop a tested product or service.

Inspire Awards

Were small grants aimed at enabling a good seed of an idea, rooted in the community to begin to grow and develop.

Some social ventures progressed through the support over the course of the programme, accessing funding at more than one level. Others will be eligible and encouraged to apply to UnLtd for further support once the programme ends.

Social Enterprise

Phase 1:

Explore the challenge workshops

Key achievements

01.

We built a productive community of people willing to work together to transform ageing

02.

Social Entrepreneurs who attended were able to test and validate their concept and better understand the journey through later life

03.

Social Entrepreneurs had the chance to build relationships and networks with people in later life, public sector leaders, and the delivery organisations to help them grow their venture

Key learnings

01.

Commissioners enjoyed stepping out of their usual routine and engaging with stakeholders

02.

Commissioning and health sector businesses aren't set up to encourage innovation, which limits the impact of engaging individuals

03.

People in later life felt listened to. We now need to make sure their ideas are reflected in the products and services on offer

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# Iterations for future programmes

01.

Strive for an even more diverse community of participants than we have already achieved

02.

Seed funding or support for all other brilliant ideas that emerged from the process

03.

Social entrepreneurs had the chance to build relationships and networks with people in later life, public sector leaders, and the delivery organisations to help them grow their venture
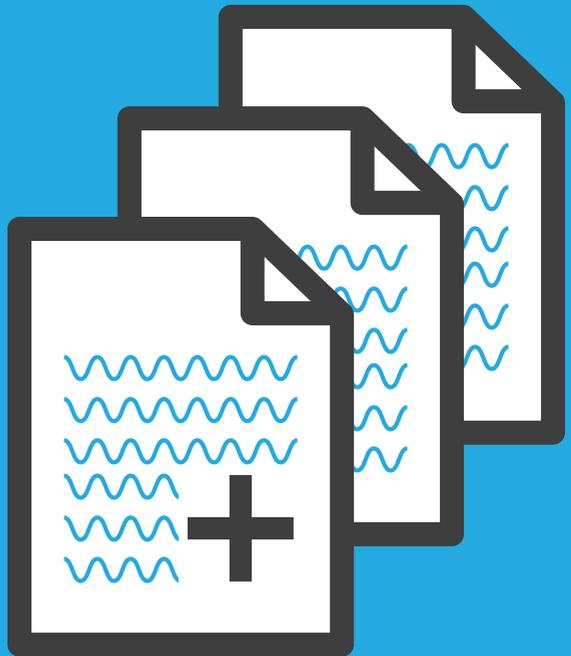
Phase 2:

Supporting Social Entrepreneurs

Key achievements

01.

We have supported 49 social entrepreneurs to deliver products and services to people in later life in the south west reaching 100s of people

02.

Delivery organisations have provided social entrepreneurs with access to people in later life and routes to market

03.

All delivery organisations agreed that the programme had achieved its aim on reaching those hard to reach audiences

04.

Strong partnerships have been built with strategic partners; invitations to sit on programme boards have been sent to bring in further expertise

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Key learnings

01.
Because we involved such a broad range of participants, the needs of local people that were raised are very broad. It's important to find solutions that fit as many challenges as possible

02.
Actively involving People in Later Life in the design and delivery of programmes or using the evaluation toolkit to develop a theory of change were most useful in understanding the needs of people

03.
Due to the popularity of the programme, we need to make it more accessible for people who live further away in order to maximise participation and diversity

Iterations for future programmes

01.
Brainstorm ways to maintain energy and enthusiasm that was so strong at different points throughout the programme

02.
Support social entrepreneurs to find further ways of responding to the needs of people in later life that we were able to define

03.
Further training for the delivery organisations to ensure that they can add maximum value throughout the programme

Other emerging outcomes

01.
Delivery organisations have a better understanding of the design process and are able to apply design-led approaches to their work. The design workshops and Tool Kit workshop in particular were highly productive.

02.
Two activities in particular gave a sense of working towards the common goal of improving people's experience of ageing: Inspire Awards which involved people unable to participate in workshops, and Tool Kit workshops, enabling delivery organisations to take what they have learnt back out to the community.

Programme