



Glasgow and West of Scotland Forum of Housing Associations

Community Regeneration Learning

Briefing Note No 4

Community Connectors



Community Regeneration Learning Network Meeting # 4

This is a note from the fourth meeting of the **Community Regeneration Learning Network** of the Glasgow and West of Scotland Forum of Housing Associations on 4 December 2015

The session brought together housing associations and voluntary sector organisations interested in exploring the types of services and supports that older people in their communities need to live well and to continue to contribute to the community.

The session provided an example of housing associations and voluntary sector working together to meet the needs of older people in the community. This included:

- a presentations about **Community Connectors** a partnership project between GCVS and Glasgow and West of Scotland Forum of Housing Associations that supports older people and their carers to access local services, facilities and activities, enabling them to live well in their communities.
- a presentation from Shettleston Housing Association, a Housing Associations with a history of delivering a wide range of services to meet the needs of the community and one which hosts the Community Connectors project in the East of Glasgow .

The session also included a presentation on the development of Glasgow's Dementia strategy. Participants were then invited to contribute to the consultation on the Dementia Strategy (see separate note of responses to the strategy consultation).



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Community Connectors: Working in partnership to support older people

Gillian McCamley, Programme Manager of Community Connectors

Community Connectors is an exciting new partnership project between GCVS and GWSF which was developed as a result of the Older People's Change Fund. The project connects older people to services and facilities to keep them active and connected to their community.

The aim of Community Connectors is

- To **support people** to live well day to day through enabling access to community-led resources that will support them to meet their financial needs, participate in social life and adopt healthier habits
- To improve **communication, connectivity and referral pathways**, reducing barriers to services and so enabling greater activity and take up of support by older people

There are three local Community Connector teams,(one in each sector of the city). Each team is located within and working alongside a local Housing Association.

The services provided by Community Connectors are:

- **Signposting & referring** – to facilitate better access to better information on local services, groups, clubs and activities.
- **One to one person centred service** – to support older people to identify issues that affect their ability to live well and work collaboratively with them to support them to make decisions on the issues they would like to address.
- **Buddy support** – to provide support to accompanying older people to activities or services to help them to settle in.
- **Volunteering opportunities & recognising older people as assets** – matching older people into appropriate volunteering opportunities

Progress so far

The service has had 153 referrals (with the majority of referrals coming as self-referrals and referrals from the Housing Association) and delivered 191 sessions to older people and their carers.

The primary reason for referral is social isolation:

- 20% referred for social isolation
- 18% referred where physical ill health was the cause for social isolation, and
- a further 16% referred because they want better links to the community

For further information about Community Connectors, please refer to the attached presentation.

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Chris Cunningham, Director, Shettleston Housing Association.

Chris is the Director of Shettleston Housing Association (SHA), one of the Housing Associations that hosts the Community Connectors project in the East of Glasgow.

Chris described the development of a number of projects that Shettleston Housing Association has delivered over the years to meet needs in the community.

- **Shettleston Community Growing Project (SCGP)**

SHA responded to a demand from local people who were keen to see a community allotment in the Shettleston area. SHA made land available for the allotment site and provided staff support to develop the project, alongside community partners and Glasgow City Council. It has as established a community and wildlife garden, has provided over 50 local residents with raised beds in which to grow vegetables and has rolled out a gardening club for children – the Smelly Welly Club.

- **Green Volunteers**

The Green Volunteers Project has developed from the Community Growing Project and is getting more local people into gardening, improving their health, fitness and social life. People who volunteer at the project are also supported to improve skills and consider pathways towards employment.

- **Men's Shed Project**

SHA recognised that although many men suffer from social isolation, they are less likely to engage in community activities to the same extent as women. SHA developed a Men's Shed – a 'men only' project aimed at engaging those men suffering from social isolation.

- **Fuse Youth Café**

SHA worked in partnership with a local group to convert a disused public house to Shettleston's first youth facility (opened 2009). Although Fuse is an independent charity, the Association continues to support its work and promote its services throughout the community.

Upkeep – Shettleston Community Enterprises

SHA set up Upkeep in 2005 to create jobs for local people. Upkeep delivers property maintenance and estate caretaking services. It is a Social Firm and 25% of its jobs are reserved for people with disabilities or social disadvantage. More recently Upkeep has developed a furniture recycling project and now runs four shops which sell low cost but high quality, second hand furniture. The shops also provide volunteering and employment opportunities for local people.

Key lessons from involvement in 'wider role' activities

Shettleston Housing Association's involvement in 'wider role' activities has provided the Housing Association with a better understanding of the needs and issues in the community. Through these activities, the HA has 'got to know its tenants/resident and now knows more about what people in the community really need.

Shettleston Housing Associations experience has highlighted the capacity of CCHAs to act as vehicles for better delivery of services to the community.