

Executive Summary

How Social Entrepreneurs are Transforming Ageing: lessons learnt so far from the Transform Ageing programme

People aged 65 and over are a large and rapidly growing group, there are currently more than 11.9 million people aged 65 and over in the UK, with 3.2 million aged 80 and over and 1.6 million aged 85 and over. It's no secret that we are living longer than ever before but millions of us risk missing out on a good later life!



About Transform Ageing

Launched in 2017, Transform Ageing set out with a bold aim to improve people's experience of ageing. It was an innovative programme targeting the south west of England combining co-design, community action and social entrepreneurship to create new, people-centred solutions that better support the needs and aspirations of people in later life.

Funded by the National Lottery Community Fund, a partnership of four including Design Council, UnLtd (the Foundation for Social Entrepreneurs) the South West Academic Health Science Network (SW AHSN), and the Centre for Ageing Better delivered the programme. Crucially it was supported by four local community organisations in its delivery across Cornwall, Devon, Torbay and Somerset with people in later life driving the initial phases of the work.

As part of the programme, 64 social entrepreneurs have been found, funded and supported via financial and non-financial awards. These awards enabled them to launch product or service solutions in the region that support connected, healthy, happy and active later lives. They were guided in the development of their ideas by six "Innovation Briefs" that were co-designed through a detailed process of collaboration with key stakeholders. The six briefs were:

1. Steps to a positive future
2. Mobility and transport
3. Life transitions
4. Caring about carers
5. Right information, right time
6. Making connections.

Each award was tailored to the needs of each social entrepreneur and the stage of growth of their venture. This included business planning, network building, financial modelling, design, evaluation planning and marketing to name but a few.



The Social Entrepreneurs being Evaluated

The evaluation is focusing upon the activities of those who received the most funding, the 13 ventures, with reviews being carried out at six-months and more detailed evaluation being carried out at 12-months post funding. As of July 2019, four social entrepreneurs had completed their 12-month funding period and nine ventures had completed six-months with the programme.

The four enterprises reviewed at a full 12 months are diverse but have in common that they are all based outside of the South West and used Transform Ageing funding to attempt to scale up and spread their innovation. These are:

- **Book of You** provides reminiscence therapy using a digital app to encourage people in later life and people with dementia to share their stories
- **Move It or Lose It** is improving physical and mental health through their revitalising exercise classes for those in later life
- **Sporting Memories Network** helps people with dementia and depression to regain their identity and make friends through a common love of sport and to help rebuilds their confidence and resilience to live happier, more independent lives
- **The Sewing Rooms** is an established women-led social enterprise supporting people in later life and creating meaningful opportunities for personal and professional development through using a combination of sewing and creative activities, confidence building and skills training

“The 12-month reviews demonstrate the length of time and complexity needed to spread innovation.”

Those reporting at the 6-month stage include:

- **Atlas Respite & Care** provide specialised dementia care at The Ness in Teignmouth. Its model of care is based on an innovative model that has been shown to be successful in the Netherlands
- **CareCalls** uses a proprietorial software system to deliver automated phone calls via landline or mobile which are used to deliver reminders and check-ins for people who live independently but have some memory loss
- **Chaos Group** is delivering a project called ‘Over my Dead Body’ via drop in sessions at Café Chaos in Cornwall. People in later life and their families and friends could come in and ‘have the difficult conversation about death and dying that might otherwise be taboo’
- **Find Your Voice** is running 10-week ‘Momentum Music and Movement’ course to people in later life who can benefit from a social, fitness based, health and wellbeing activity
- **Good Boost** runs an aquatic exercise and rehabilitation programme delivered in local swimming pools for a wide range of musculoskeletal and neurological conditions focusing on the lower body. Participants use a tablet running an AI powered app which offers them individually tailored, evidence based, progressive exercises to perform in the pool
- **Local Treasures** matches over-50s with flexible and casual work and ‘odd jobs’ in their local area. Sarah Heyworth, founder and CEO, operates the business nationally from Petersfield, Hampshire. Workers, or ‘Treasures’, are recruited on a self-employed basis and can pick and choose the hours and types of jobs they do, allowing them to fit work in with other responsibilities
- **Made Open** an online platform that gives communities a trusted place to exchange information and services for good causes providing members the ability to access volunteering opportunities, find local services and social groups or exchange their skills for time credits amongst other things
- **Moments Café** is a dementia-friendly café in Plymouth city centre that hosts the Memory Matters Hub and Information Centre. It offers information and referral to those in need of advice and support around memory loss and dementia
- **Filo Project** offers small-group day care in the private homes of ‘hosts’ for people in later life who are socially isolated, many of whom have early-stage or moderate dementia. Hosts pick up three or four beneficiaries by car in the morning, serve a home-cooked lunch and return them home in the afternoon. Because of its format the service can work anywhere, even the most rural areas.

The nine ventures examined in these above case studies represent a diverse cross-section of businesses that benefit people in later life, from Good Boost’s AI-enabled hydrotherapy tech to the FILO Project’s home-based day care and Find Your Voice’s transformational music and movement courses. Despite their diversity, they all share a common purpose, to enact positive social change for people in later life.

There was a rapid review of the 16 Early Stage and Inspire social entrepreneurs. Out of these, eight social entrepreneurs were identified as having been very successful throughout the lifetime of the programme, showing evidence of clear outcomes, having engaged well with the development of their approaches and been successful in creating solid delivery process and sustainable trajectories. These 8 are a mixture of ventures and early stages and have been involved in Transform Ageing for between 6 and 15 months as follows:

- **Move it or Lose it** (details above)
- **Aquafolium** reconnects people with nature, helping vulnerable and socially isolated groups to improve their wellbeing and lead healthier lives by designing and running nature-based interventions, experiences and activities including forest bathing and nature therapy
- **Made Open** (details above)
- **Filo Project** (details above)
- **Atlas Respite & Care** (details above)
- **Personal Alarm Watch** helps older people be more active and more independent. The device has unlimited range, working in the garden, down at the shops or even hiking all over the UK
- **ADI Access RoomMate** has created audio way-finding technology for both the visually impaired and those suffering with dementia, preserving their dignity and independence whilst using a toilet when away from home
- **NedCare** provides industry regulated community-led care in rural North East Dartmoor in areas that are difficult to access

Emerging Outcomes

Given the short reporting timeframe within which to set up new businesses and deliver outcomes, the reviews have tended to focus on learning and process, with outcomes, or indication of outcomes, given where possible.

More broadly, across the wider cohort of social entrepreneurs, outcome areas appear to be clustering around improvements in wellbeing, reduction in social isolation and increasing independence. In terms of relating these to the innovation briefs which guided the social entrepreneurs, they are most likely to link to innovation brief one **“Steps to a positive future”** and innovation brief six **“Making Connections.”** These briefs highlight the: **“importance of engagement in community, finding ways to support connectivity, as well as building skills and increasing physical and mental activity.”**

Moments Café in Plymouth are in the process of collecting ‘loneliness impact’ stories through the 226 people who attend and live alone

Looking forward, Move It or Lose It and Sewing Rooms are well-placed to keep growing their foot-hold within the region.

Move It or Lose It now have 16 instructors trained in the south west with 70% of those being over 50 years of age. There are 300 people enrolled in classes and attending weekly with an average 48.2% improvement in the 30 second ‘sit to stand’ test

Many of the social entrepreneurs are rethinking what it means to age, taking the view that our current conceptions of the steady decline of ageing (and for some social entrepreneurs, of dementia) are not accurate. These social entrepreneurs are attuned to the limited options, in many senses, that are currently facing people in later life.

“They are responding by offering more choice and opportunity to a demographic that is often overlooked in this regard.”

Devon County Council have commissioned all ten Find Your Voice courses, with 120 beneficiaries reached to date and Yeovil Hospital have contracted Greenspace to pilot a breast cancer recovery support programme

There is also emerging evidence that Transform Ageing is making an economic impact within the south west with (currently) 172 jobs being created by social entrepreneurs.

Local Treasures recruited 134 people in Devon, Cornwall and Somerset in the first three months of the service being up and running. Those recruited are mainly aged 50-70 years of age with 154 active beneficiaries being supported in their communities

Overall at this stage what emerges is a story of process, with social entrepreneurs describing what they have done in order to start making headway within the region. We are also seeing that plans change over time and original outcomes set may not be achievable within the small timeframe given. There is also evidence of how person-centred design works, with the need to flex the model to fit local context and needs, creating iterations of an original model which result in a different approach to that originally planned. The social entrepreneurs have all achieved something, although not necessarily to the extent that they planned, or in the way that they planned.



What we are beginning to learn

In terms of what we are learning, there are clear themes emerging from across the award-winners:

- It takes time! For many of the social entrepreneurs, it has taken longer to get things going than they thought.
- Social entrepreneurs need to be open to adaptation and the programme needs to be able to support that.

Move It or Lose It have demonstrated that through reflection and iterating their operating model to suit local needs, they have shown how organisational success is driven by a continuous learning approach.

- Working with commissioning systems can be time-consuming and tricky.
- Becoming reliant on limited, external funding sources is dangerous. Many have used the support through the TA programme to build sustainability into their business plans.
- Learn from people in later life. A number of the ventures turned to groups of people in later life to learn how to improve their offer.

Personal Alarm Watch invited groups of people in later life together in Torbay to help prototype iterations of their watch

- Some have used innovative approaches to recruit and retain staff.

Local Treasures are incentivising recruits for bringing in more team members and making their lives simpler by providing a 'one stop shop' approach to admin tasks through an app

- Understanding local context is vital! Without really spending the time on understanding the local setting, stakeholders, policies and culture, there is a risk that the enterprise will not work. At the least, it will make everything a lot more difficult.

Book of You found that a lack of knowledge about the commissioning process in the south west for clinical commissioning groups and local authorities hampered development. This is where local intelligence gathering is vital and where Transform Ageing's local networks and relationships proved invaluable for those wanting to break into the south west.

- Local networking helps move things along a great deal. Social entrepreneurs hugely benefited from links made through Transform Ageing Delivery Organisations, partners and peer social entrepreneurs.

Suggestions of new venues by local volunteers led to increased participant numbers for Sewing Rooms and Book of You work with Age UK Falmouth came via another local group called Join the Dots

- Co-design helps to make sure the idea/business works, and it also builds up a really useful support base.
- Having someone to bounce ideas off is vital, the support given by UnLtd Award Managers was seen as central to success.
- Having access to mentoring, coaching and training helped increase confidence and bridge knowledge gaps.
- Peer support from other social entrepreneurs is helpful both practically and emotionally and partnerships are being forged to support each other going forward.

Local Spark, run by people in later life, is bringing together other social entrepreneurs in the Torbay area for mutual support as well as bring in others with great ideas but who don't know where to start

- Social entrepreneurs have made extremely useful networks that will enable them to continue their work beyond the end of the programme.

Sewing Rooms have used community navigators and connectors to link them into existing knitting and craft groups as well as promote sessions and help bring people to the sessions themselves

- Having the time and space to try out ideas is seen as invaluable to social entrepreneurs who now believe they can build on their work beyond the programme.

What Next

Going forward, support will be given to social entrepreneurs to focus on outcomes and it is hoped that the lessons learnt from these social entrepreneurs can be fed into any ongoing development and support given to the social entrepreneurs as well as into similar programmes.

Finally, the partnership has also commissioned an external evaluation partner to look at the programme as a whole and to include completed outcome data for all supported social enterprises. This Final report will be published in February 2020.

ⁱ Centre for Ageing Better, The State of Ageing in 2019 – Adding Life to our Years, March 2019

Transform Ageing is delivered by:

