

The Role of Housing

April 2019



T.E.D.

Ageing Better
in East Lindsey

The role housing plays in reducing social isolation and loneliness in East Lindsey

This report highlights learning from the TED programme on the role that housing plays in reducing social isolation and loneliness in East Lindsey. Data has been collected via semi-structured interviews, focus groups, case study reports and informal conversations with delivery partners, volunteers and service users. Interview recordings were transcribed verbatim and thematically analysed. Pseudonyms have been given to all participants to protect anonymity.

About TED

Talk Eat Drink (TED) Ageing Better in East Lindsey is part of Ageing Better, a programme set up by The National Lottery Community Fund, the largest funder of community activity in the UK. Ageing Better aims to develop creative ways for people aged over 50 to be actively involved in their local communities, helping to combat social isolation and loneliness. It is one of five major programmes set up by The National Lottery Community Fund to test and learn from new approaches to designing services which aim to make people's lives healthier and happier.



TED is funded by The National Lottery Community Fund and is managed by YMCA Lincolnshire



Waterloo Housing and TED projects

Waterloo independent living schemes provide many older people, who live in East Lindsey and Lincolnshire more widely, with a safe place to live independently. Most schemes provide flats within a main building, and some also offer bungalows on the same site. All residents have the use of shared facilities, which often include a communal lounge, gardens, laundry room and, in some locations, a community centre, hairdressers and an on site café.

Waterloo Housing venues, including Elizabeth Court in Louth, the Community Centre at Woodhall Spa, and Barratt Court and Saxon Fields in Skegness, play a key role in reducing social isolation and loneliness in East Lindsey. Several projects within the TED Ageing Better in East Lindsey Programme utilise these venues and their communal areas to host a wide range of sessions and events. Examples include:

- Teas with TED
- Friendship Groups
- Fitness, Food and Friends Sessions – delivered by the Commissioned Service, Magna Vitae

Friendship groups are a self-sustaining community initiative developed from the original Tea with TED events and supported by the TED Friendship Officer. The aim of the groups are to welcome and encourage anyone aged 50 and over to get involved with their local community, meet new people, and take part in social activities. Friendship groups are led by volunteers and they have their own committees. The TED Friendship Officer provides each friendship group with support in areas such as applying for sustainability funding and the identification of suitable locations to hold their meetings/sessions. Volunteers are encouraged to plan activities, outings and engage other members of the group to ensure the groups success and longevity.

Magna Vitae, a Commissioned Service on the TED programme, deliver the 'Fitness, Food and Friends' project which, so far, has covered the following topics: Glycaemic load in nutrition; antioxidants, fats and oils; food and mood; the role of protein in the diet; B Vitamins; the Mediterranean diet; Indian food; mental health, heart health; and type 2 diabetes. All sessions include an educational element and a short session of physical activity.

For older people living in the rural East Lindsey district, Waterloo Housing venues are safe, familiar, accessible and age-friendly, and the sessions are often well attended by those who live in the independent living flats and bungalows, and also older adults who live in the surrounding areas.

Research Findings

Key findings from the learning data we collected cohere around the location of Waterloo Housing venues, accessibility, age-friendly facilities, and safety.

Martha (TED Volunteer) was instrumental in setting up the Time Out Friendship Group at Barrett Court Central Café, Skegness. In her interview she explains why, in the set-up phase of the project, she thought Barrett Court would be a good location for the friendship group. In addition, Martha and Grace both state that Barrett Court residents and older adults who live in the wider Skegness community regularly attend the weekly session:

“You want people to join in and this has got people upstairs that will probably come down too.”
(Grace, TED Service User)

“Well it’s sort of connected to my mom, because she nearly came here. She died just before she was a hundred and she was at Dobson, close to Burley Marsh, but she got to the point where she needed a bit more care and they do have rooms here that you have a bit of nursing attendance and if you can’t get out your room, you know. Several of the people that were in Dobson Court moved here before they died. And, so this place was... I thought well it’s a nice place. I thought it would be nice to get some of the residents, some of them that I knew, down to this meeting. And I thought that would be good for them not just to stay in their room all the time. I think that spurred me on getting it [the Time Out Friendship Group] going and we do get a few of them come down now. It’s nice to see them - it is. Yeah it’s an ideal place to meet. I mean they have only got to come downstairs but there’s a huge community around here lots of houses. And we do get people coming in from the community as well. It just seemed like the ideal place to have a friendship group. There’s the café and there’s things going on in the other rooms and it’s ideally situated really.”

(Martha, TED Volunteer)



Volunteers and Service Users at Barrett Court Central Café

The locations of the Magna Vitae 'Fitness, Food and Friends' sessions at Woodhall Spa Community Centre and The Hub at Saxon Fields were also described by service users to be 'very convenient' and 'just over the road' from where they live. In the following case study provided by Rita (Service User, Fitness Food and Friends) she mentioned how the opening of The Hub at Saxon Fields has enabled and encouraged her to 'get out every week, meet new people and do exercise':

"I moved onto the new Saxon Fields development on the 28th April 2017. I live on my own in a bungalow. I don't bother with neighbours. I spend most days on my own in my home. Since the Hub opened it gets me out every week, I meet new people and I do exercise with Erica which I enjoy with no pressure from anyone – its fun. The last hour Marko does some cooking which we taste at the end. This is very interesting as Marko uses ingredients I've seen but never used. He also explains what the foods are, why they are good for you and on occasions what foods help with ailments. The foods are not too fussy, minimum ingredients and cooked in one pan which is ideal. I didn't often bother with a lot of cooked meals for one. But I do try now."

(Rita, TED Service User)



Service Users at a Magna Vitae 'Fitness, Food and Friends' session at Woodhall

Accessibility and age-friendly facilities were themes that emerged strongly from the data. Here participants make reference to the facilities on offer at Waterloo Housing venues, their cleanliness and again the advantages of attending sessions in venues that are easily accessible:

“The venue it’s just perfect I’d say. I mean there’s no obstacles to coming here and it’s perfect for upstairs [residents] as well.”
(Martha, TED Volunteer)

“I drive and there is a car park so no problem.”
(Walter, TED Service User)

“I guess it’s not far for me to walk. It’s probably about 15 minutes. As I see it, it’s a disability and OAPs purpose built building, there’s 40 flats. It has a cafe downstairs which is open to the public. It’s on a bus route within Skeg, so it’s easily accessible to quite a lot of people.”
(Betty, TED Volunteer)

“You’ve got a cafeteria that sells gluten free for me, I am a coeliac. You’ve got tables and if you feel trapped or claustrophobic you can move about. It’s just a nice place. It’s much easier with my walking stick.”
(Grace, TED Service User)

“You can have a coffee and then when it’s finished, as I am on my own, I stay and have my lunch here. It is nice and clean and the toilets, yes - nice place.”
(Mabel, TED Service User)



Service Users at a Magna Vitae ‘Fitness, Food and Friends’ session at Woodhall

Finally, the need to manage physical safety was highlighted as highly salient by service users. During the interviews beneficiaries and volunteers described how they felt safe attending sessions at Waterloo Housing venues which they perceived as welcoming, age-friendly environments that have been purposely built for older adults:

“You don’t have to worry here, it’s [the building] purposely made so that you can get around without causing any trouble, you know. It’s something that you have to think about more when you get older, falling, tripping. You don’t get any trouble here, it’s nice, safe and the people are all good people and it’s secure and you can do your exercise and learn about your cooking, all the different types [recipes], and it’s all healthy. It’s designed that way, to be good for the older people. You know some of us have health illnesses.”

(Peter, TED Service User)

“Here it is more open and people can just come in and join in and have a laugh and what have you, it’s lovely. I’ve had my life threatened a lot of times so I don’t like people sitting behind me. I can sit with my back towards the room and I don’t feel there is anybody near me because there is space. If I’m on the bus I have to sit with my back away from people because it just worries me. I mean I suffer with PTSD, low moods and anxiety. And it’s hard, it really is especially when I have been through what I have been through. But yeah, I love it here. I love the people and the staff are absolutely fabulous. If you need any help they are there. I mean the lady behind the counter will give you a card and when you’ve had so many cups of tea you know you get one free. Which is nice because you know when you go in the shop and you buy one get one free. People will join in. If you want to talk to somebody privately you can because you’ve got your group and it’s safe. I mean it’s lovely in here, look how the sun is shining through, it’s beautiful.”

(Grace, TED Service User)

“I think it’s a very secure environment because it’s a public café but it’s also a secure unit for the flats. So they’re not going to get odd people should we say.”

(Betty, TED Volunteer)

Summary points and key learning messages



TED sessions delivered in Waterloo Housing venues have reached and engaged older adults who are lonely, vulnerable and/or socially isolated



TED service users and volunteers reported feeling safe attending sessions in familiar, age-friendly, purpose built Waterloo Housing venues located in close proximity to their homes



Waterloo Housing venues provide clean, accessible facilities for older adults who have a range of different health issues and/or disabilities



Tea with TED session at Elizabeth Court



About East Lindsey



East Lindsey is a large, sparsely populated district within the county of Lincolnshire, which includes the popular coastal seaside towns of Skegness and Mablethorpe.

East Lindsey has a higher than average ageing population with 29% of people aged 65 and over. High numbers of older people move to East Lindsey in their retirement years and many have multiple chronic health conditions and few social and familial connections in the region. Public transport across East Lindsey is poor and therefore accessing services can be challenging, especially for older adults.

The overarching aims of the TED Programme are to:

- Reduce social isolation and loneliness
- Help older people to become better connected with volunteering, social, leisure and health improving activities
- Provide opportunities for older people to influence the design, delivery and evaluation of both the services and businesses available to them

We currently have 1279 registered TED members, 69 businesses across East Lindsey hold an Age-friendly Business Accreditation, and 451 volunteers have contributed 6,751 hours to the TED programme between April 2018 and February 2019.

Further information...

To find out more about TED or to get involved visit our website www.tedineastlindsey.co.uk or start a conversation and share your views online: Twitter: [@ted_EastLindsey](https://twitter.com/ted_EastLindsey)



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