

HOOP SCDC Pathway Project Trial

EVALUATION

Introduction

The Trial started as an outcome from the DFG Review carried out in 2016. The Review identified three key findings, the first having a direct relevance to this Trial:

Key finding 1: New services are needed that consider people's needs in context, including early conversations and planning for the longer term

Services surrounding the provision of housing adaptations tend to consider an individual's needs at a single point in time – the point at which they apply for a housing adaptation. However, the property that they live in may not be suitable for them in the longer term; it does not make financial sense to carry out an expensive adaptation if the property will only support them to live independently for a short period before they need to move to alternative accommodation. There is a need for more dedicated support for vulnerable households to consider their housing options more fully before their home is assessed for an adaptation.

A variety of different housing services are available, several of which could, if appropriately signposted to, engage with people and their families before they reach the point of needing a particular adaptation; and more general advice services need to include information on housing. This should focus on encouraging people to think about whether the accommodation they are living in is suitable for the longer term, and consider moving to a property that will meet their needs for longer. This is often a difficult topic to address, but is essential to ensure that people are living in housing that is appropriate and easily adaptable.

In order to develop new services and meet the broader outcomes required by the Better Care Fund Guidance the DFG Review Steering Group agreed to use the revenue previously supporting the HIAs to fund two new posts. One post in the County Council's Adult Early Help Team to support older people, and one in the Children's Disability Team to support families. In addition, a small pot of funding was identified (£26k) to support service development in both. This evaluation relates to the Older Peoples HOOP Trial. The original scoping paper for the trial is attached at Appendix 1.

Partners to the Project

The key partners to the project were:

- Cambs County Council Adult Early Help Team/Commissioning
- South Cambridgeshire District Council
- Elderly Accommodation Counsel (EAC)

¹ DFG Review 2016

➤ Care Network (Silverlinks)

The scoping paper, Appendix 1, details the role of the partners in the Trial.

The County Council's Adult Early Help (AEH) team was identified as the most appropriate service in which to locate a housing options advisor. The team is multi-skilled including occupational therapists, social workers, support coordinators and welfare benefit advisors. They have strong links to the reablement, sensory services and technology enabled care teams. The addition of a housing specialist within this team could facilitate early conversations and provide a more integrated early intervention approach. It was agreed to fund a Housing Specialist for one day a week in the AEH Team as part of the initial trial.

South Cambridgeshire District Council had approached the County Council in 2017 and asked to work more closely with the Council on new initiatives. Following further discussions it was agreed that the HOOP Trial would take place in the South Cambridgeshire district. This had the advantage of having no major town, but having a large elderly population.

A key element of the Project was to include the Housing department at the district council and both the Housing Options Manager and the Older Peoples Visiting Support Service Managers were involved and represented on the Project group.

During the Review the Housing Options for Older People (HOOP) service provided by the Elderly Accommodation Counsel (EAC) was identified as an existing free service already running nationwide. This provides an innovative approach to delivering housing options advice to older people through the use of an online tool and telephone advice line. They hold comprehensive information on accommodation for older people across the country which is regularly updated.

Following discussions with EAC and having gained support from partners at a stakeholder event held in May 2017, it was agreed to partner with them for the period of the trial. A proposal was agreed including training for staff teams on 'how to have the conversation' and the development of a number of leaflets and booklets to support the Trial.

Another key element was the development of what are known as Silverlinks volunteers. These are older people who volunteer to go and talk to people who are thinking about moving or having adaptations done to provide peer support, reassurance and talk about their experiences in an open and informal way. A national Silverlinks scheme run by Care & Repair England and funded by The Big Lottery was nearing the end of a five year trial and it was agreed to apply for a small amount of funding which could be used by Care Network to provide information to the community and recruit and manage volunteers. A small sum of initiatives match funding was also provided by the County Council. This £4k allowed a Community Worker to increase her hours by five a week and to enable the recruitment of volunteers.

Evaluation

Key lessons were learnt early on in the trial.

Trial launch

A soft launch approach was taken to the start of the trial in August 2017 focussing attention on two of South Cambs larger villages Sawston and Linton. There was initial concern that the First Stop advice line and AEH Advisor would not be able to manage a high number of referrals. However there was little uptake of HOOP online or by paper copy so the trial was launched across the wider district in September. The Care Network advisor spent many hours going out to deliver information and talks about the service over the coming months but numbers using the HOOP tool were still low.

Learning: People take time to absorb information and act on it. Be bold in promoting information on this type of scheme as numbers approaching for support will be small, at least initially.

Leaflet/Information development

Initially the service was promoted through the use of existing HOOP tool leaflets branded jointly First Stop/SCDC/CCC. During the trial a suite of 3 leaflets were developed including:

- A joint branded paper based HOOP leaflet.
- An A5 booklet providing a comprehensive guide on everything from staying put and adapting the home, to buying or renting retirement housing, extra care, information on care homes, etc.
- An overarching leaflet describing the aims of the partnership and how people can access advice and support.

A separate infographic showing the pathway and service options is nearing completion and will be used for professionals and stakeholders. This can be used during the countywide service launch.

Learning: Information for the public needs to explain simply what the offer is about in a simple clear way. Clear concise branding has the advantage of linking messages. A range of online and paper based tools can reach a wider audience and prove beneficial for professionals engaging in supported conversations with individuals.

Communications Plan

A communications plan was put together and numerous ways of disseminating information about the HOOP Project were used. A summary report of the key results up to February 2018 are shown in Appendix 2.

Learning: Social media can have significant impact on numbers of people accessing information online through HOOP. Positive messages about the benefits of moves seem to be more engaging than negative messages about the difficulties faced with current housing. Targeting people in their 50's and 60's resulted in an uptake, potentially as a result of people supporting their parents.

No. of the public using the HOOP tool / advice line:

Take up of use of the online HOOP tool was slow and is shown in the table below. There is evidence that the strong pushes on communications including social media in October, December and January increased take up of the HOOP tool. As our Facebook and Twitter campaigns were not specifically targeted at people in South Cambs only, this accounts for take up in the rest of the county.

Cambridgeshire HOOP User sessions

CouncilArea	2017-07	2017-08	2017-09	2017-10	2017-11	2017-12	2018-01
Cambridge	4	5	3	8	5	7	20
East Cambridgeshire	4	7	1	7	5	10	17
Fenland	2	6	3	4	3	5	13
Huntingdonshire	10	6	1	12	7	14	39
Peterborough	6	13	5	11	6	10	20
South Cambridgeshire	10	14	18	31	8	17	23
Total excl. P'boro	30	38	26	62	28	53	112

The HOOP tool is designed as a self-help option and very few contacts resulted in calls to First Stop's advice line and only 1 to a visit from the AEH advisor. This shows the benefit of a strong, localised self-help tool like HOOP. Anonymised views gathered via a HOOP exit survey showed that nationally 80% of users would consider suggesting HOOP to a friend or family member, and almost 70% of users who were looking for solutions to concerns about their home said that HOOP gave them all the information they required.

Specialist Housing Advisor:

The trial was used to evaluate the benefits of 2 approaches to this role. Initially a member of the AEH team, a qualified Social Worker, took the role on 1 day a week. Findings from the 3 month trial period showed that it was exceptionally challenging to skill the individual up quickly in enough areas of housing knowledge to be effective. In addition, it became challenging to balance the duties of focusing on preventative advice around social care and housing. Case analysis showed a lot of the proportionality of the AEH approach was lost and there was a progression towards ongoing case work.

The second half of the trial has seen someone with a background in housing support and Home-link applications carrying out the role one day a week. Clear advantages to this approach have been seen. Referrals to the AEH team often contain elements of Housing

Options advice. Having an expert in the team has benefited in terms of regular case discussions, ensuring that advice is given in a timely way, reducing handoffs and signposting to other teams and services.

Joint working between the SHA and AEH workers allows us to create a package of support that compliments each element, providing better plans of support and advice. The role has in effect only run for 10 working days but is already strengthening the AEH prevention offer.

Learning: There are clear advantages to adding a SHA into the work of AEH in terms of prevention work. In turn there will be advantages to the SHA being part of a multi-disciplinary team of Social Workers, Occupational Therapists and Welfare Benefit Advisors. A specialist with existing knowledge will be required to roll this support out further. A key role for the post will be training and upskilling AEH and wider social care teams to better identify opportunities to hold conversations about housing.

Care Network/Silverlinks

As part of the trial, Care Network Cambridgeshire has been promoting the HOOP service alongside their existing Community Development and Community Navigators services. Strong synergies have been found between other areas of their work and being able to give advice around housing options for older people. Over the period of the trial 14 talks have been given to 144 people and more than 900 leaflets have been provided at doctor's surgeries, MDT Co-ordinators and libraries around the district, as well as being given out to local residents for their own use and to share with friends and neighbours.

Talks have been delivered to local Care Homes where the audience has been residents' relatives in their 50s and 60s, who may be considering options for their own housing needs; to people involved with Parish Councils giving them additional resources to support their residents; to community groups on an informal basis which has worked particularly well where a HOOP volunteer has also been a group member and is something we would like to expand so that the trained volunteer also becomes a 'connector' for the project.

The Silverlinks volunteer role has been developed and continues to evolve forming part of the ongoing offer from Care Network. There are currently three volunteers involved, all of them have made decisions about their own housing options so have first-hand experience of making, what can be a difficult choice. The volunteers have worked through the EAC First Stop Self Training Module for Advisers which together with the HOOP leaflets and housing options booklets provide a firm foundation for assisting clients to find out more about local housing options.

Throughout Care Network Cambridgeshire, information about the HOOP project has become embedded as a valuable service to residents of Cambridgeshire. Community Navigators have given out HOOP information and signposted enquirers to First Stop to obtain tailored information. The connections Care Network already has with social groups in

the area have been beneficial for delivering the HOOP information, as a trusted provider. A map of links to services identified by Care Network throughout the trial is found in Appendix 3.

The Silverlinks volunteer role has been developed and will form part of the ongoing offer from Care Network.

Conclusion and way forward:

All partners within the trial agree that there have been clear benefits to the approach taken although the period has been too short to show some of the advantages we had hoped to demonstrate.

South Cambridgeshire District Council's visiting support service for over 65s highlights the fact that their current caseload includes working with people who would clearly benefit from considering a move but do not want to. They feel that getting to people at a much earlier stage would allow them to work over a short period to provide the advice and help needed to support timely moves.

The trial has allowed the development of a full job description the Specialist Housing Advisor and this will bring someone into post in May/June.

Care Network agree that they will continue the Silverlinks volunteers and moving forwards will seek to add this as an additional duty to volunteers working in other aspects of their services.

First Stop wish to continue working with us to roll out a county wide offer and feel this proactive approach to housing options advice will meet our preventative agenda and reduce the need for more costly reactive crisis support.

In summary this will move from a trial to business as usual with a greater emphasis on partnership support and joint working between all stakeholders.

A project plan for countywide implementation is being developed to cover the period April to June 2018 and it is hoped that the 'HOOP offer' can be promoted to all older people across Cambridgeshire in the coming months.

Trish Reed / Stuart Brown

April 2018.

Appendix 1

South Cambs DC ~ Cambridgeshire County Council ~ First Stop

Adult Early Help Trial ~ Housing Options for Older People

Draft Scope and Protocol Document ~ June 2017

SCOPE

Background

The County Council carried out a review of the DFG service in Cambridgeshire in 2016 and a key finding was that new services were needed to get 'upstream' and offer housing options advice and support to people at a much earlier stage. This finding also meets the Council's Tier 1 and 2 priorities under Transforming Lives of 'self help' and 'help when you need it'.

In order to consider how this new service might look across the County we have agreed to establish a trial project in one district to test an Adult Early Help HOOP Service relating to housing and housing options. Developing the trial and careful monitoring and evaluation will inform the new countywide services planned from April 2018.

Partners

A number of partners have come together in order to design, manage and evaluate the project, these include:

- Cambridgeshire County Council – Adult Early Help Manager, DFG Review Project Lead, OP Social Worker, Communications Manager, Library Service,
- South Cambs District Council – Head of Housing Advice/Options, Allocations Manager, HRS Older Peoples Support Service Manager, Head of Housing Strategy
- Elderly Accommodation Council - Chief Executive, First Stop I&A Manager

Scope

The pilot will initially focus on people over 65 years of age and will include:

- Developing a bespoke Cambridgeshire HOOP web based tool to be used across the County with appropriate links through CCC and SCDC websites.
- Promoting the EAC Housing Care webpages and information and advice services in the same way.

- Developing paper leaflets in order to promote the service in a number of agreed access points in South Cambs to include libraries, GP surgeries, etc.
- Placing of articles in SCDC newsletters and magazines promoting the AEH HOOP Service.
- First Stop will carry out training for relevant staff in the skills needed to have a 'housing conversation' with older people.
- Agreeing a protocol between AEH, First Stop HOOP and SCDC Housing/ Home-link and OP Visiting service to co-ordinate customers' needs.
- Initial assessment and home visit for anyone interested in considering a move to alternative housing.
- Identification of 'housing lead officer' in order to be the single point of contact for housing options information and support. This could be most appropriate person and not necessarily the visiting assessment officer.
- Promoting the use of the Older Peoples visiting support Service to support anyone who wishes to consider moving.
- Accessing SCDC Adaptations Policy funding or handyperson service for potential relocation grants or minor adaptations pending a move.
- Considering the existing relationship between the OP Locality Team and the Housing Team at SCDC and how the draft protocol recently suggested can be best designed to meet needs.
- Considering training up a Silverlinks Volunteer to provide peer support and do talks to groups of older people about the benefits of moving.

Timescales

The Pilot project is expected to run for six months from August to December 2017. It may 'run on' if it is successful and demonstrates increased engagement and moves.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring will take place on a monthly basis, with statistical evaluation taking place at end of September and end of December.

A database of contacts via First Stop will be used to measure performance, designed in order to monitor how many people are:

- Accessing advice and support,

- Improving the quality of their accommodation
- Improving their wellbeing
- Supported to move as a direct result of the new approach.

Costs/budget

The County Council will fund the costs of the First Stop element of the project through an already agreed proposal and provide Project Management support.

South Cambs DC will contribute staff time to the project and meet any of its own costs in relation to the proposal.

Protocol relating to a Trial in South Cambridgeshire between the partners

Partners to the protocol:

- Cambridgeshire County Council / Adult Early Help
- Elderly Accommodation Council / First Stop
- South Cambridgeshire District Council

Roles and responsibilities:

Each partner agrees to take responsibility for elements of the Trial.

First Stop will:

Develop and promote a bespoke First Stop/Cambs CC housing and care options guide and HOOP webpages.

Develop and print supply of paper leaflets to promote the service in agreed locations in South Cambridgeshire. Receive back paper leaflets and make contact for an initial conversation with clients

Develop a plan and carry out 2 Training sessions for Adult Early Help, Housing Options officers and Visiting support team members on the skills needed to have a broad housing conversation. Send link to online self-training guide.

Develop a monitoring and evaluation system using information from their database to input into a broader evaluation tool. This will cover three levels of enquiries: Information (how many leaflets are given out, etc.), Advice (how many calls and visits are received) and casework and outcomes. Information can be monitored by leaflet supply, Advice can be monitored via the AEH team and First stop will monitor and follow up on the casework from their systems.

Adult Early Help will

Make all Adult Early Help staff aware of the Trial and encourage participation, referring clients to the First Stop website in appropriate circumstances in the first instance.

Liaise with the Contact Centre, Assistive Technology, Reablement, Sensory Services, etc. around the Trial and ensure appropriate pathways are in place for referral between County Council services.

Create (via potential Initiative funding) capacity within the AEH team to carry out home visits and assessment and support the trial. This dedicated resource (1 day a week) will input information onto a monitoring system for evaluation purposes.

Promote the HOOP leaflet to County Council teams, libraries, by post to clients, etc.

South Cambs DC will:

Promote the Trial to the Housing Options Teams and ensure their participation in the proactive provision of housing options advice to older people.

Link in with Housing Register and CBL officers in relation to applications for social housing, considering policy issues in relation to time allowed to move and potential for discretionary housing payments to cover two rents. Trawl housing register for people who are on register but haven't bid who may need support to consider options.

Promote the trial to the in house Older Peoples Visiting Support Service and ensure there is capacity to undertake casework with clients who wish to consider a move. Ensure the workers are aware of all housing options, handyperson services, social rent, private rent, leasehold, owner occupied options, extra care etc.

Lead on publicity and promotion of the Trial within the South Cambs area including the drafting of articles and inclusion in district magazines and any press releases. Consider using Parish Councils and bigger health centres. This to be carried out in conjunction with the Project Lead to ensure consistency of approach across partners.

Distribute leaflets to access points in the district

Project Lead, County Council will:

Administer the Trial meetings and provide project management

Draft a protocol to agree across the partners.

Liaise with CCC Communications and web teams regarding any internal or external comms.

Consider whether a Silverlinks volunteer can be funded from the innovation fund.

Develop a monitoring and evaluation system to monitor progress and outcomes.

Update Health and Social care teams and provide briefings for Managers.

Appendix 2.

HOOP trial comms briefing

Social media:

4 paid for Facebook ads - **total spent £263.18**

Facebook ad	Engagement
Targeted ad for Linton and Sawston August 10-24, 2017 (general)	62 link clicks, reached 774 people, 7,180 impressions
South Cambs Facebook ad: October 1-15 (general)	151 link clicks, reached 7,366 people, 20,669 impressions
One week Cambridgeshire-wide ad after Christmas December 27-January 3 (targeting relatives)	332 link clicks, reached 11,398 people, 20,667 impressions, 16 likes, 6 comments and 14 shares.
Two-week Cambridgeshire-wide ad 17-31 January (targeting moving house sooner)	650 link clicks, reached 14,723 people, got 33 likes, 9 comments, and 26 shares.

Other social media:

Tweets and Facebook posts were sent out from October 1-30 and four weeks of social media messages from January 17 to coincide with January Facebook ad.

- **Tweets**
 - 22,017 impressions
 - 175 engagements
 - 65 link clicks
 - 13 retweets
 - 11 likes
- **Facebook**
 - 7,097 reach
 - 49 link clicks
 - 46 comments, likes and shares

Articles in parish mags and other publications:

Six parish magazines September-December in South Cambs: Bourn Parish Council parish newsletter, Meldreth Matters; *Bar Hill News*; What's on in Landbeach; Over magazine; Challenge mag (covering Weston Colville and West Wrattling)

Article in March / April / May 2018 edition of Carers Trust Magazine which will reach over 8,000 family carers in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

[Camweb posts](#) - Posts on daily blog on October 2 and 3 in December.



HOOP Access Routes

