

Rowlands Gill and Gateshead Link Up Chopwell

LinkAge Plus

Live at Home Scheme

A charity offering a quality low level support service to older people in the community, who may be isolated and unable to get out and about as they used to. It is run by local people and is supported by volunteers who help with many activities or by participating in our visiting service.

Live at Home Scheme

Objective

The Rowlands Gill Live at Home Scheme is a community based project aiming to offer a volunteer-based friendship and support service to older people who are housebound or socially isolated. The Scheme, in conjunction with other agencies, aims to enable members to continue living at home independently whilst enhancing their quality of life.

Activity

We currently have 160 older members and over 50 volunteers on our files. The Scheme has made 2500 contacts during the two year period, and maintained and developed 250 groups. We run 6 activity groups fortnightly within our catchment area, including a very successful Men's group. We arrange entertainment in various guises, singers, speakers, slide shows, outings, and staff entertainment. We also have volunteers visiting some of our more vulnerable members on a regular basis. We provide transport to help people with poor mobility to access community life, escort members to medical appointments and also take them shopping. We have one volunteer who makes sure that each member and volunteer receives a birthday and Christmas card – for some of them it is the only one they receive.

Activities have included a Men's Health Day, local environment days attended by various speakers and local councillors, Cafe Days with speakers talking about Pensions, Benefits etc. followed by a themed lunch, e.g. Italian and French.

Achievements against objectives

With the funding from Link Up we have been able to continue with the provision of our services, and promote knowledge of the Live at Home Scheme and its way of working. We give people choices by involving them in our events and the planning of future programmes.

Wider achievements

We have been able, through Link Up, to reduce the age people access our project, to 50 years, although most of those younger people have become volunteers rather than members.

We have had flu vaccination days, where we have arranged for partners in Link Up to have information stands at this community event in partnership with the local medical centre. This annual event attracted over 900 people last year. We have been able to help combat social isolation in older people in our area and to contribute to their well being.

Resources

We received £27,550 from Link up for each of the two years, along with additional funding which has allowed us to replace our very old computer system and to purchase a lap top, screen and projector to enable us to show our members the many photographs we take during the events. Turning these into slideshows allows us to have a 'free' event, and also to use when speakers come and give presentations.

Key lessons learned

Working in partnership is very important and productive. Listen to the views of your members and volunteers is essential. We are a needs-led service and take their views into account as a matter of course. We have found out that what works as an event at some of our groups, doesn't work at others. For example, craft classes are loved by some and disliked by others. This will have an affect the numbers of people attending the group.

Being part of the Link Up project has enabled us to share good practice with our partners and to work with people that we hadn't worked with before and to build long lasting partnership working and new found friends.

It would have been more beneficial to all partners and to the pilot as a whole, if the length of time given was more than the two years. This is itself a short period, which is reduced further by start-up time.

Further information

Staff at the project are:

Tracy Dixon – Manager

David Johnson – Assistant Manager

Kathleen J Walls – Assistant Manager

Evelyn Carrick – Admin Assistant

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Ref to website: www.mha.org.uk. Click on Services for Older People, then Live at Home

Related documents

Annual Report and our Annual Plan available for perusal.

