



# Promoting mental wellbeing, tackling loneliness: a review of the effectiveness of actions delivered outside of the health sector

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# Objectives

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- To review empirical studies on effectiveness of interventions to improve/protect the mental wellbeing and/or independence of older people (including retired people over 55).
- Excludes interventions for people with diagnosed health problems, inc dementia /mental disorders & substantial health & social care needs
- Excludes one to one interactions with health and social care professionals
- Focused on positive mental wellbeing outcomes, measures of social participation
- Examples today taken from review prepared to inform development of NICE guidance on promoting mental wellbeing & independence for older people

# Search Process

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- English language material published since 2013
- Wide range of databases, citation tracking, snowballing
- 18,513 records screened
- 424 examined in full text
- 86 studies included

Mentoring /  
Signposting

Social  
Activities:  
Arts & Culture  
Participation

Self  
Management:  
Bibliotherapy

Support for  
older carers

## Many different types of action

Intergenerational  
Activities

Communication,  
Support &  
Friendship

Computer /  
Internet  
Training

Lifelong  
Learning

Social  
Gatherings /  
Sports  
Activities

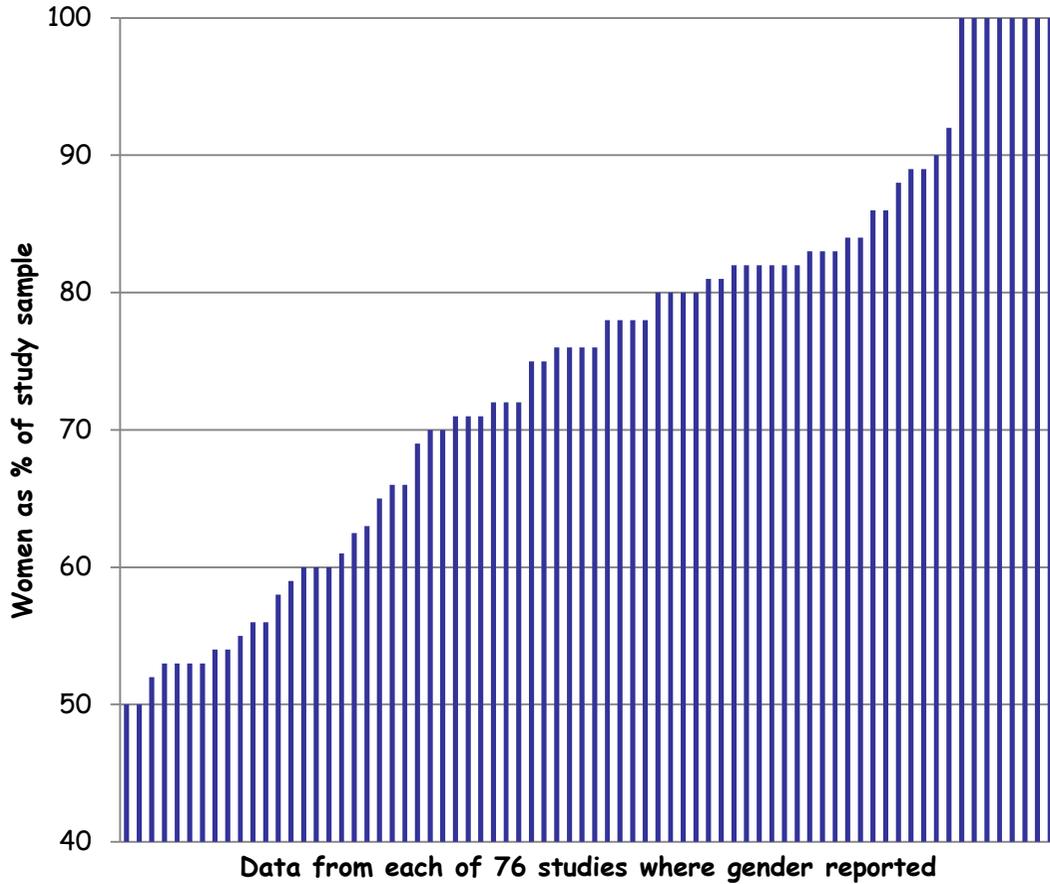
Volunteering

# Overview

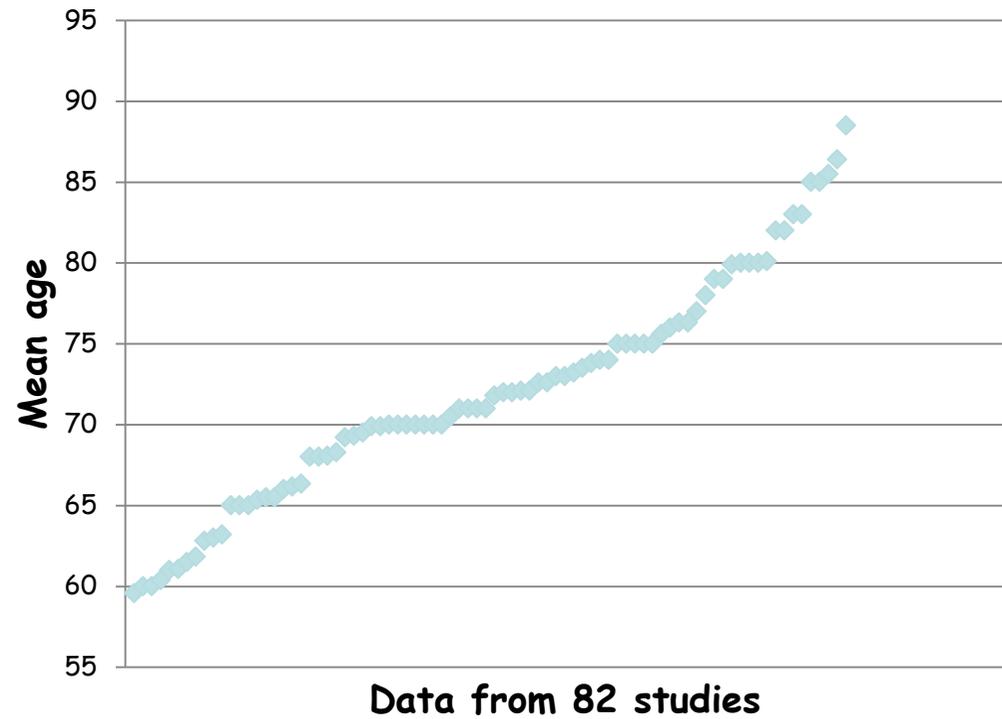
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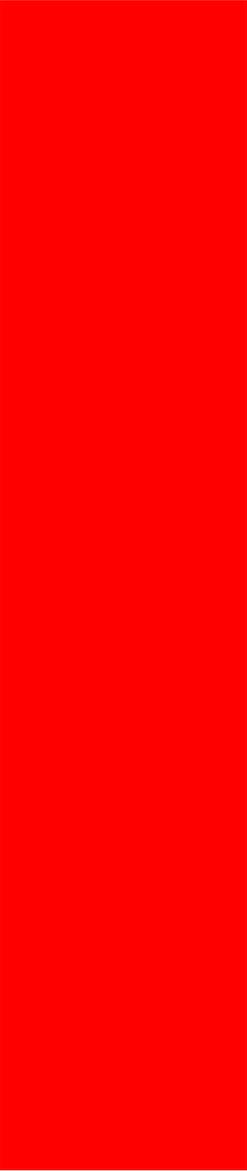
- 9 studies from the UK; 2 from Republic of Ireland
- Interventions and activities discussed are feasible to implement in a UK context.
- Many different countries around the world; US studies dominate
- Only 17 of the studies used randomised controlled study designs, limiting the internal validity of the evidence base.
- Most studies have relatively small populations; few appear to have powered their studies to detect significant effects:
- 55 studies have total populations that are less than 100 and 33 have total populations that are under 50.

### Women as a % of study population



### Reported Mean Age of Study Populations





# Arts & Culture Based Activities

# Art related interventions

| Study                       | Design                              | Sample size   | Intervention content  |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|---|
| Coulton ++, 2015, UK        | RCT                                 | 131 (intervention), 127 (control);<br>84% women, mean age 69            | 14 week community group singing programme for people over the age of 60                                       |
| Cohen + (2006) USA          | Quasi-experimental study            | 90 (intervention)<br>76 (controls)                                      | Participation in a professionally led choral singing group  |
| De Medeiros, ++, 2011, USA  | RCT                                 | 18 (writing workshop)<br>18 (oral reminiscence)<br>15 (no intervention) | Autobiographical writing workshop and oral reminiscence   |
| Hallam, +. 2014, UK         | Quasi-experimental study            | 398 (intervention)<br>102 (Comparison groups)                           | Various forms of musical activities and non-musical activities e.g. yoga, language classes, social activities |
| Haslam, -, 2014, Canada     | RCT                                 | 40 across three intervention groups                                     | Singing secular songs, story reminiscence, singing religious songs  |
| Lee, ++, 2010, Hong Kong    | RCT                                 | 31 (intervention)<br>35 (control)                                       | MP3 Music listening programme   |
| Seinfeld, +, 2013, Spain    | Quasi-experimental study            | 13 (intervention)<br>16 (control)                                       | Weekly piano lessons for older people   |
| Sole, -, 2010, Spain        | Before and after with controls      | 52 (Choir)<br>19 (Music Appreciation)<br>19 (Preventive Music Therapy)  | Choir, music appreciation class and preventive music therapy  |
| Travers, -, 2011, Australia | Uncontrolled before and after study | 154 (intervention)  | Bygone radio broadcast programming (1920s to 1950s)   |

# Community Group Singing

## Effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of community singing on mental health-related quality of life of older people: randomised controlled trial

Simon Coulton, Stephen Clift, Ann Skingley and John Rodriguez

### Background

As the population ages, older people account for a greater proportion of the health and social care budget. Whereas some research has been conducted on the use of music therapy for specific clinical populations, little rigorous research has been conducted looking at the value of community singing on the mental health-related quality of life of older people.

### Aims

To evaluate the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of community group singing for a population of older people in England.

### Method

A pilot pragmatic individual randomised controlled trial comparing group singing with usual activities in those aged 60 years or more.

### Results

A total of 258 participants were recruited across five centres in East Kent. At 6 months post-randomisation, significant

differences were observed in terms of mental health-related quality of life measured using the SF12 (mean difference = 2.35; 95% CI = 0.06–4.76) in favour of group singing. In addition, the intervention was found to be marginally more cost-effective than usual activities. At 3 months, significant differences were observed for the mental health components of quality of life (mean difference = 4.77; 2.53–7.01), anxiety (mean difference = -1.78; -2.5 to -1.06) and depression (mean difference = -1.52; -2.13 to -0.92).

### Conclusions

Community group singing appears to have a significant effect on mental health-related quality of life, anxiety and depression, and it may be a useful intervention to maintain and enhance the mental health of older people.

### Declaration of interest

S.C. is a board member of Sing For Your Life Ltd, a not-for-profit third sector organisation which played a role in developing and implementing the intervention reported.

# Silver Song Clubs

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- **Coulton in press (++) 'Silver Song Clubs'** 258 older people, 84% women, mean age 69, 5 clubs in East Kent, almost all White British
- 14 weeks of professionally led singing programmes; comparators - usual activities.
- At 6 month follow up significant improvement in SF-12 mental scores; 2.35 mean difference ( $p < 0.05$ )
- Potentially cost effective - cost per QALY gained £2800 but only 64% chance of being cost effective if £20,000 per QALY gained

# Golden Oldies

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Registered Charity

Lottery Funded

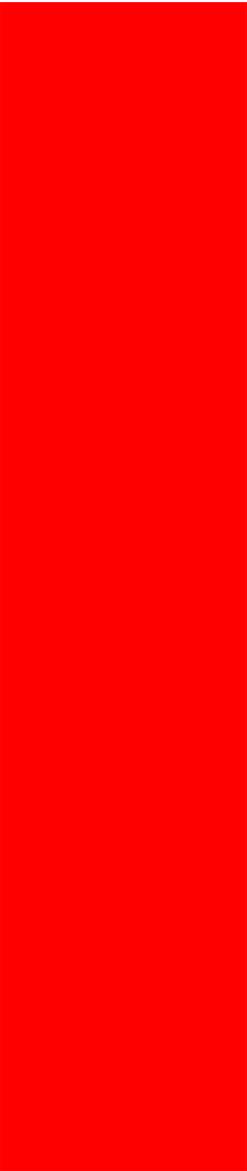
Operating in south west  
England and Wales

Group singing and other  
activity events

Only one local authority has  
consistently funded

Almost 100 local groups now in  
existence

**Goldies who attended a BIG SING at  
Writhlington School near Bath in 2012**



# Building Friendships

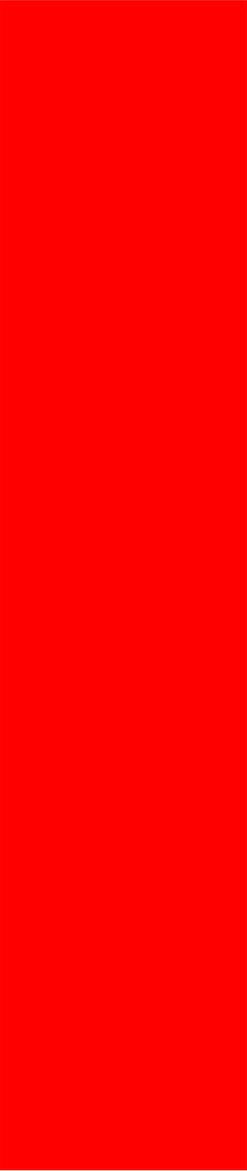
# Study overview: Building friendships

| Study                               | Design                              | Sample size  | Intervention content  |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|---|
| Butler - (2006)<br>US               | Uncontrolled exploratory study      | 66 (intervention)  | Senior Companion Programme (SCP), <b>providing social support and assistance</b> to frail community-dwelling older adults                                 |
| Lawlor ++ (2014)<br>Ireland         | RCT                                 | 49 (intervention), 51 (control); 75% women, Median age 80                      | Brief <b>volunteer peer visiting programme</b> for community dwelling older people  |
| Martina + (2006)<br>The Netherlands | Quasi-experimental study            | 69 (intervention)<br>60 (control)  | <b>A friendship enrichment programme</b> , focusing on empowering the older participants to develop and maintain friendships by training social abilities |
| Martina + (2012)<br>The Netherlands | Quasi-experimental study            | 69 (intervention)<br>60 (control)  | <b>A friendship enrichment programme</b> , focusing on empowering the older participants to develop and maintain friendships by training social abilities |
| Pope - (2013)<br>US                 | Uncontrolled before and after study | 142 (intervention)   | <b>A church-based spiritual health promotion programme</b> bringing together representatives of different church congregations                            |
| Stevens + (2006)<br>The Netherlands | Quasi-experimental study            | Study 1:<br>72 (intervention)<br>Study 2:<br>69 (intervention)<br>55 (control) | <b>A friendship enrichment programme</b> , focusing on empowering the older participants to develop and maintain friendships by training social abilities |

# Evaluation of Only The Lonely

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- **Lawlor 2014 (++) 'Only the Lonely'** 30 peer volunteer visiting programme in rural and urban areas in 3 counties in Ireland for 100 older mean, median age 80, 49 intervention, 51 control.
- Volunteers matched with older people - visits at least 1hr per week for 10 weeks; controls - usual care
- 3 month follow up De Jong Gierveld Loneliness Scale scores significantly lower in the intervention group ( $p=0.003$ ). Differences on social loneliness subscale ( $p=0.022$ ) and the emotional loneliness subscale ( $p=0.015$ ). No difference in social network scores. 25 of 49 participants continued to be visited by volunteers after end of trial.
- Also potential reductions in loneliness for older volunteers but no control group.



# Intergenerational activities

# Intergenerational activities and volunteering

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School-based interventions

Interventions with children outside of school

Older people as volunteers

# Non-school based intergenerational activities

| Study                    | Design   | Sample size  | Intervention content   |
|--------------------------|--|--|--|
| Cook - (2013)<br>UK      | Exploratory<br>uncontrolled<br>before and after<br>study | 30 older volunteers,<br>14 men and 16 women,<br>mean age 74                | <b>Volunteers trained to rear and look after chickens, visit older people and schools.</b>   |
| Kamei - (2011)<br>Japan  | Before and<br>after study<br>with controls               | 14 older people, 8<br>programme<br>student<br>volunteers and 7<br>children | <b>Intergenerational day social and activity programme</b>   |
| Marx + (2005) USA        | Non randomised<br>controlled<br>study                    | 38 (intervention)<br><br>27 (control)                                      | intergenerational email pen-pals programme and an intergenerational face-to-face visiting programme  |
| Morita - (2013)<br>Japan | Exploratory<br>observational<br>study                    | 11 (intervention)<br><br>14 (comparision)                                  | Intergenerational programme where older adults participated in <b>singing, dancing and games with preschool children</b> who visited an adult day centre |

# Henpower



**Is this a good place to roost?**

- Cook 2013 (-) 'Henpower' 30 older volunteers, (mean age  $73.89 \pm 13.95$ ) 16 women, 14 men. Gateshead, Big Lottery Silver Dreams Fund
- Trained/supported to establish hen houses in care settings and deliver activities to older people, friends/relatives, care staff/managers and school children.
- Significant improvement on Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale from baseline to 9 month follow-up 41.0 to 53.0 ( $p < 0.000$ )
- Non-significant improvement on De Jong Gierveld Loneliness Scale scores from median of 5.0 to 4.0 ( $p < 0.281$ ).
- Limitations: small scale, no comparison group.

# Intergenerational Activities

- **Intergenerational programme in community involving older adults and children.** Using SF-8 at 3 months and 6 months post programme older adults had significantly improved mental health component scores ( $F [2.26] = 4.00, p = 0.030$ ) (Kamei 2011 -)
- **Intergenerational programmes involving social activities seem to better support intergenerational conversations than passive activities watching theatre/musical activities.** ( $p < 0.001$ ) (Morita 2013 -)
- **With an intergenerational pen-pal programme after 6 months, 57% of older adults enjoyed the programme; 88% took part in face-to-face visits to pen-pals. 26% would have liked to continue to contact pen-pals** (Marx + 2005).
- **Positive outcomes for volunteers in US Experience Corp (many studies)**

# East Dorset: Examples

csv.org.uk

Retired and Senior Volunteer Programme

**Retire into Action**

## RSVP Dorset East

- Home
- What we do
- What's new
- Where we are
- Contact us
- Nationally

### Welcome to RSVP in Dorset East

The Retired & Senior Volunteer Programme (RSVP) is a part of Community Service Volunteers (CSV). RSVP is for mature people (50+) who have built up skills and experience through their life, and who would like to offer some of it back to their local Community through voluntary work.

Our regional branch has over a hundred members and the Region covers all BH post codes from Christchurch, Bournemouth & Poole to Swanage.

Membership is open to all: everybody has something to contribute to the community and a lot to gain from joining RSVP.

This web site will tell you a little more about the things we do, our whereabouts, and how you can contact us.



**Radio Solent Katie Martin Show**

*Making a difference in our community is what volunteering is all about.*

Maddy Jackson, Project Organiser

CSV make a difference rsvp

A A A  
Change Text Size

Includes schools Project

More than 50 volunteers working with children whose first language is not English

Advice in GP Surgeries

Book Clubs

# Signposting

| Study                  | Design                          | Sample size                         | Intervention content  |
|------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| Dickens + (2011)<br>UK | Non randomised controlled study | 200 (intervention)<br>195 (control) | Mentoring intervention targeting socially isolated older people, <b>mentors offered the relevant social skills and capabilities</b> for social participation  |
| Greaves - (2006)<br>UK | Quasi-experimental study        | 172 (intervention)                  | Adult volunteers were trained as mentors to work closely with older adults, aiming to <b>engage them in programmes of creative, exercise and/or cultural activities, with an emphasis on social interaction; volunteers could refer older people to their own programmes or other programmes in community</b> |

# Signposting

**Positive mental health and social support** seem to improve among older adults supporting peers in their social participation (Greaves 2006 -) Improved positive mental health at 6 months (SF-12) (Mean = 3.02, CI 95%: 1.01 to 5.04,  $p < 0.005$ ); no significant effect at 12 months; Medical Outcomes Social Support Scale mean scores 1.88(1.11 s.d) to 2.08 (0.99 s.d)  $p=0.02$

But subsequent larger study looking at the same intervention in same location **could not evidence any impact** on mental wellbeing or social support - with the exception of one measure, 'getting along with others' - which declined (Dickens 2011 +)

# Dorset Wayfinders

Dorset divided into 33 local areas - 2  
Wayfinders; 18 hours per week in total in each  
local area;

Salaries paid by Dorset Council

Local evaluation: 2049 (33%) of all their  
complex home visits over the 12 months to May  
2013 were made to address and signpost people  
to social integration activities while another  
1,117 contacts (18%) were to address good  
health and mind

Extrapolated - 11,373 contacts of all types to  
address social integration if the share of  
complex cases were to be repeated for all  
contacts.

If 82 contacts led to one case of GP  
consultation and cognitive behavioural therapy  
for depression avoided then the scheme would  
be cost saving.



Photo: Wayfinder gives advice at a local  
launch event

Provide information and signposting services  
to all over 50

Based in various settings including GP  
practices, libraries shopping centres and  
provide home visits for more complex cases.

# Mapping of local services, designed to combat loneliness and isolation, in Cotswold district

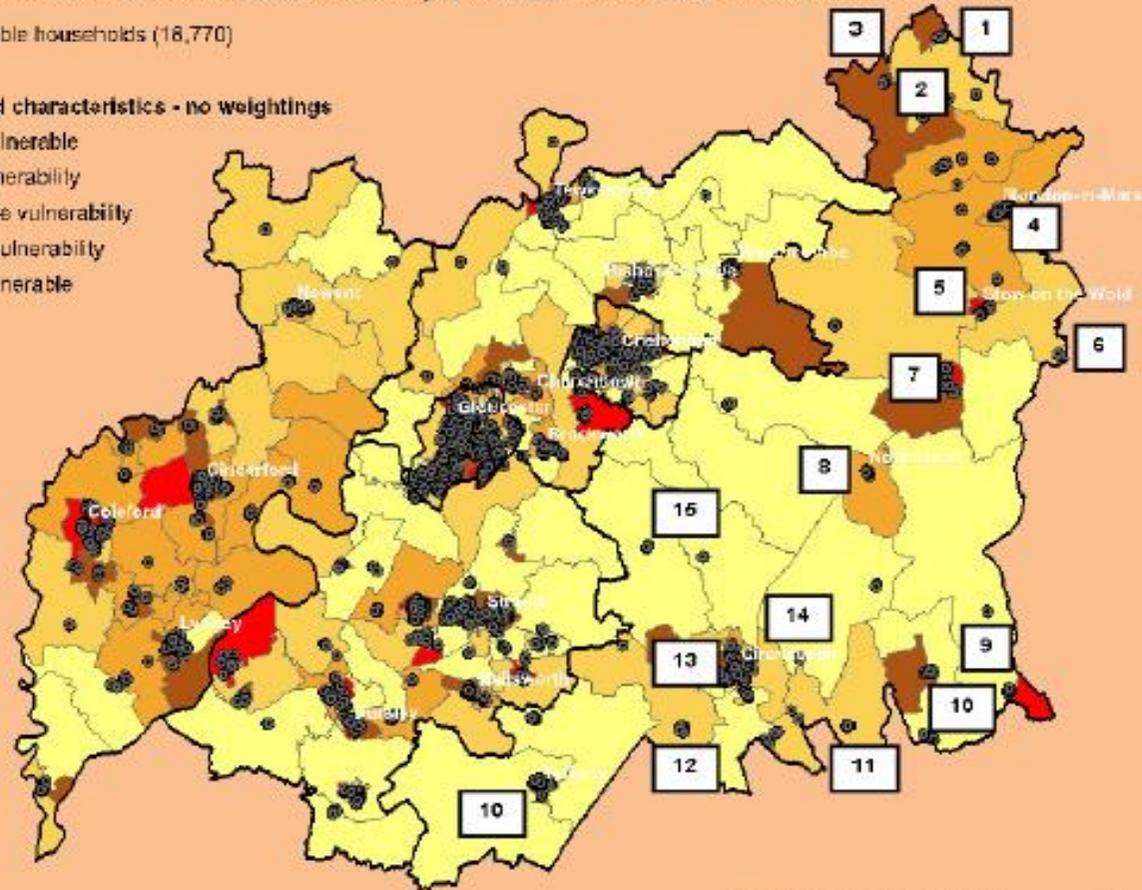
## Social isolation: Socio-economic vulnerability based on LSOA and vulnerable households

● Vulnerable households (18,770)

### LSOAs

#### All Household characteristics - no weightings

- Least vulnerable
- Low vulnerability
- Moderate vulnerability
- Higher vulnerability
- Most vulnerable



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Strategic Needs Analysis Oct 2013



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**1. Mickleton**  
Village Agent, Befriending, Carer Respite, Community Transport, Dementia Advisor, Social Club, Day Centre, Volunteer time-banking

**2. Chipping Campden**  
Village Agent, Befriending, Carer Respite, Community Transport, Dementia Advisor  
Memory Club, Lunch Club / Community Events, Day Centre, Volunteer time-banking

**3. Dumbleton**  
Village Agent, Befriending, Carer Respite, Community Transport, Monthly Social Club  
Dementia Advisor, Volunteer time-banking

**4. Moreton-in-Marsh & area**  
Village Agent, Befriending, Carer Respite, Community Transport, Lunch Club / Community Events, Social Club, Exercise Classes, Dementia Advisor, Memory Club, Volunteer time-banking

**5. Stow-on-the-Wold & area**  
Village Agent, Befriending, Carer Respite, Community Transport, Lunch Club / Community Events, Day Centre, Dementia Advisor  
Memory Club, Volunteer time-banking

**6. Bledington**  
Village Agent, Befriending, Carer Respite, Community Transport, Dementia Advisor  
Volunteer time-banking

**7. Bourton-on-the-Water & area**  
Village Agent, Befriending, Carer Respite, Community Transport, Lunch Club / Community Events, Dementia Advisor, Memory Club, Art Club, Carers Support Group, Church Community Group, Exercise Classes, Volunteer time-banking

**8. Northleach & area**  
Village Agent, Befriending, Carer Respite, Community Transport, Lunch Club, Social Club, Exercise Classes, Dementia Advisor, Volunteer time-banking

**9. Southrop & Eastleach**  
Village Agent, Befriending, Social /Lunch Club, Community Transport, Dementia Advisor, Volunteer time-banking

**10. Tetbury, Fairford & Lechlade & area**  
Village Agent, Befriending, Carer Respite, Community Transport, Lunch Club, Day Centre, Exercise Classes, Dementia Advisor, Memory Club, Volunteer time-banking

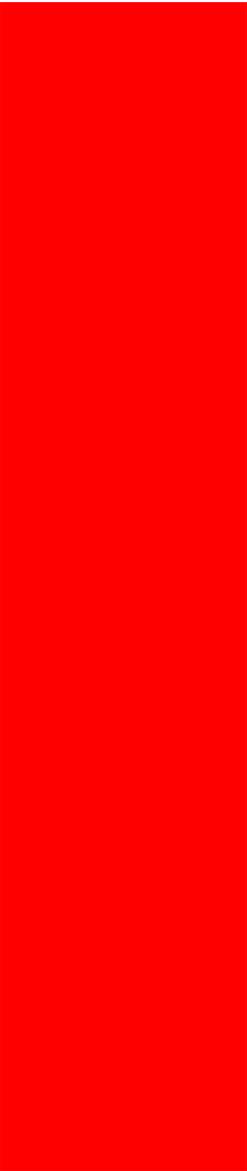
**15. Rendcomb & Chedworth**  
Village Agent, Befriending, Carer Respite, Community Transport  
Social Club with outings & lunch, Dementia Advisor, Volunteer time-banking

**14. Ampney Crucis**  
Village Agent, Befriending, Social Club, Community Transport, Dementia Advisor, Volunteer time-banking

**13. Cirencester & area**  
Village Agent, Befriending age 65+, Community Transport, Lunch Clubs / Social Clubs, Memory Clubs, Memory Café / Community Café, Exercise Classes, Dementia Advisor, Arts & Crafts & Activities, Stroke Support Group, Day Centre, Volunteer time-banking

**12. Kemble**  
Village Agent, Befriending, Community Transport, Social Group, Dementia Advisor, Volunteer time-banking

**11. Down Ampney**  
Village Agent, Befriending, Community Transport, Meals, Dementia Advisor, Volunteer time-banking



# Third Age education

# Face to face education

| Study   | Design                                       | Sample size                                    | Intervention content  |
|---|--|--|---|
| <b>Arkoff - 2004, USA</b>   | Before and after study with comparison group | Intervention: 18 women<br>Comparison: 18 women | Life review programme delivered at Academy of Lifelong Learning           |
| <b>Fernandez-Ballesteros - (2012), Spain</b>                      | Quasi- experimental study with control group | 56 intervention group<br>39 control group      | 3 year university programme for older adults                              |
| <b>Fernandez-Ballesteros - (2013), Spain, Chile, Mexico, Cuba</b> | Quasi- experimental study with control group | 250 intervention group<br>65 in control group  | 3 year university programme for older adults                              |
| <b>Orte - (2007) Spain</b>  | Uncontrolled before and after study          | 186 (intervention)                             | A community-based <b>open university programme</b> targeting older adults |
| <b>Portero - (2007) Spain</b>                                     | Uncontrolled before and after study          | 163 (intervention)                             | <b>A Third Age University Programme</b>                                   |

# Third Age Education

- Participation in 3 year education programme in Spain associated with **non significant improvements in positive affect and no worsening of negative affect** compared to controls (Fernandez-Ballesteros 2012 -). Same intervention assessed across four countries reported **negative affect significantly reduced** ( $t = 5.17, p < .01$ ) (Fernandez-Ballesteros 2013 -).
- Other evaluations of participation in university-level studies **show increased psychological wellbeing using the Scale of Wellbeing** (3.6 s.d. +/- 0.4 to 3.9 s.d. +/- 0.4,  $p < 0.000$ ) as well as **increased number of new social contacts measured using The Social Support Questionnaire** (mean 31.1 s.d. +/- 2.2 to mean 32.7 s.d. +/- 2.4,  $p = 0.000$ ) (Portero 2007 -).
- Evaluation of **participation in an Open University for Older People's programme** in the Balearic Islands, found an **increased number of new relationships** ( $p < 0.001$  - no values reported) (Orte 2007 -)
- In a small study participation in a 14 week **Life Review programme** for students an **Academy of Life Long Learning** compared to controls who did not do Life Review - significant improvements in all sub-scales of the 84-item Scales of Psychological Wellbeing (at least  $p < 0.05$ ) (Arkoff 2004 -)

# University of the Third Age

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- *"retired and semi-retired people come together and learn together, not for qualifications but for its own reward: the sheer joy of discovery! Members share their skills and life experiences: the learners teach and the teachers learn, and there is no distinction between them."*
- In all case study areas; in April 2014 925 U3As with 321,966 members; Sheffield has more than 3,000 members
- Self funded, nominal - total member income in 2013/2014 was £1,117,878 or less than £4 per member. Third Age Trust covers liability insurance costs of up to £5 million
- Not able to find formal effectiveness evaluation in literature in UK only of similar models outside UK

Number of activities

180  
160  
140  
120  
100  
80  
60  
40  
20  
0

- Tower Hamlets
- Sandwell
- Dorset
- Cotswold
- Blackpool

Information, Signposting  
Individual support including home visits and phone contact  
Group activities (general)  
Group activities (arts and culture)  
Wider community engagement and volunteering  
Training courses for computers  
Higher and continuing education  
Training and support for older carers  
Other  
Physical Activity



# Case Study Overview

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171 organisations and community groups in five areas identified delivering at least 320 different activities

Mainly delivered by registered charities and social enterprises

Focus in most areas on tackling social isolation and loneliness - much less focus on mental wellbeing

But just a snapshot - doesn't pick up on all services and those targeted at general population - e.g. different volunteering opportunities.

Doesn't focus on interventions out of scope

# Challenges: Funding and sustainability

Mixture of funding sources: charitable grants, lottery support, user charges

Funding from local authorities less prominent outside East Dorset and Cotswold - CCGs peripheral

Although some long standing organisations and church involvement, funding appears largely time-limited and short term

Modest scale and feasible to self-fund many activities through inputs of volunteers and small fees e.g. University of Third Age

## Challenges: What do we know about effectiveness?

Very few of local services identified subject to formal qualitative or quantitative evaluation.

Exceptions include the Gloucestershire Village Agents programme - where local university commissioned to evaluate

Also evaluations built into some national initiatives/ big lottery funded etc

Mainly basic monitoring / process data collected e.g. on number of service contacts

# Concluding remarks

- There is an evidence base (albeit mainly small scale studies) on the positive effects of actions to promote on mental wellbeing among older adults
- Opportunities for investment in many different types of actions outside of health care sector
- Group based participatory activities of all sorts; volunteering and intergenerational actions also key
- But are interventions attractive to all? Do they engage all; Many potential barriers to participation
- Often can be low cost, but challenges in sustainability
- Emerging literature re evaluation of digital inclusion initiatives