

NDTi Insights give you the most important bits of learning from a piece of work by the National Development Team for Inclusion (NDTi). We aim to make them quick to read; they point to more detailed materials for those who want more information.

# Increasing the voice, choice and control of older people with high support needs: lessons from SERI

## Who should read this?

This report has significance for a number of people and agencies:

- Government departments responsible for policies that affect the lives of older people
- The Dilnot Commission & those responsible for implementing its recommendations
- Local authorities & NHS organisations
- Voluntary and private sector organisations who provide services and support to older people
- Older people and their families

## Background

This report presents the findings and conclusions of a two year demonstration project which took place in three local authorities in the South East of England (Portsmouth, Oxfordshire and West Sussex).

## Purpose of Report

To help local authorities and their partners apply the lessons from SERI in pooling their resources and ideas, and aligning strategies to achieve better outcomes for older people.

## Summary

The South East Regional Initiative (SERI) was set up by the Office for Disability Issues as part of the Independent Living Strategy that they had written.

This project tried to develop and test new ways of promoting independent living for older people living in care homes, and older people at risk of moving into care.

The three areas taking part in this project worked with local services and communities to achieve positive changes in the lives of older people with high support needs. The *SERI Story* report presents their stories and key lessons.

## Main findings

- The provision and funding of intensive support for older people are shared priorities for government departments, local authorities, NHS organisations and local communities. These concerns tend to focus on very narrow definitions of care and support for older people with little regard for wider aspects of their lives, their preferences and priorities.
- Independent living is about the whole of people's lives, not just care services. Strong partnerships and strategic leadership were therefore essential in taking this work forward in the three sites - to pool resources and ideas, and to encourage partners to view older people with high support needs as citizens with rights and contributions rather than as passive recipients of health and social care.
- Increasing the voice and visibility of older people is a vital first step in achieving greater choice and control. The SERI sites made steady progress in moving towards "coproduction", coaching and mentoring a small number of older people with high support needs in each area who are now acting as leaders and champions for change.
- Increasing personal choice and control improves decisions, avoids the need for more expensive resources, improves health and wellbeing, is rewarding for everyone involved, and ensures that older people get the right support at the right time for them.



## Further NDTi Insights:

Also available in our Insights series is:

“Support Planning and Brokerage”

Other Insights being published soon will cover:

Age Equality

Employment Planning

Mind Wellbeing Evaluation

[www.ndti.org.uk/publications/ndti-insights](http://www.ndti.org.uk/publications/ndti-insights)

## About This Report

A copy of the full report is available at

<http://www.ndti.org.uk/publications/ndti-insights/insights-8-9-independent-living-strategy-projects/>

For more information on the Support Planning and Brokerage Project, please visit the NDTi website (link below) or call Helen Bowers on 01202 471423

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- Widening access to different kinds of support (housing support, creative transport options, community based information and peer advice, discharge planning involving local voluntary sector organisations, neighbourhood based circles of support) involves a radical change to the kinds of support typically available but is possible and improves life chances and outcomes from local services.
- Adopting person centred approaches is a cost effective way of increasing choice and control for those with high support needs and those whose voices are seldom heard. These and other examples shared in the report do not have to cost additional money, but do require changes to how existing resources are allocated and used.

## Conclusions and Key messages

The following six priorities were agreed by a high level national Project Board, to be used as an Agenda for Change by local authorities and their partners.

1. **Develop a shared vision** for improving the life chances of older people with, agreeing “what success looks like” across the whole of people’s lives and all public services. Secure commitment from local partners to adopt positive strategies for ageing well and increasing the voice, choice and control of older people who need support in their lives.
2. **Coproduce services and plans** with older people with high support needs, increasing the voice and influence of older people with a diversity of experiences and need for support. Support the development of user and peer led groups/networks in facilitating a stronger, collective voice to be heard.
3. Take a **whole system, whole community approach** to join up networks, services and budgets, tapping into local community resources as well as specialist expertise. Practical tools developed through SERI to assess local readiness for independent living with older people, and strengths and weaknesses of partnership arrangements are available at [www.independentlivingresource.org](http://www.independentlivingresource.org)
4. **Adopt person centred approaches** to drive through change and focus on older people’s hopes, aspirations and priorities, starting by reviewing local practice, experience and outcomes, and providing development support to maintain and spread what works in personalising services and support for older people.
5. Invest in and **develop strong system, community and peer leadership**, creating opportunities to harness and use the leadership skills and capacities of greater numbers of older people with a wide range of experience, backgrounds and support needs.
6. **Develop meaningful outcome measures** for independent living for older people with high support needs that can be used at a local (ongoing) level as well as a national (annual) basis, to measure progress in improving the life chances of older people with high support needs.