

CITY BRIDGE TRUST – Strategic Initiative progress report

Org name: Age UK

Ref: 14126

Purpose of grant: In partnership with Action Fraud, Age UK will support vulnerable older Londoners, raising awareness of scams, improving confidence, preventing fraud and evidencing a new model.

Project Start Date: 28 July 2017

Projected End Date: 28 Jan 2019

Summary of progress and outcomes to date:

The Scams Prevention and Victim Support programme is a pilot project delivered in partnership between Age UK and Action Fraud, funded by the City Bridge Trust. The programme aims to support older people to avoid becoming, or being a repeat victim, of scams and fraudulent activity whilst testing a referral pathway between Age UK and Action Fraud. Support is delivered across three levels and involves group awareness sessions (Level 1), one-to-one awareness sessions (Level 2), and intensive and holistic one-to-one support for older people who have been a victim of a scam (Level 3).

The intended outcomes of the project are:

- at least 75% of those who attend awareness raising sessions will be more aware of scams
- at least 75% of all people surveyed will report feeling more confident as a result of the support
- at least 75% of those supported are more confident to spot and avoid a scam

The programme was piloted in six London boroughs by five local Age UK partners: Age UK Barnet, Age UK Enfield and Age UK Waltham Forest (working in partnership), Age UK Lewisham & Southwark, Age UK Richmond.

Progress to date:

Based on data available from the interim evaluation report (Feb 2019). Please note the final evaluation report will be ready in June 2019.

Between February and the end of August 2018, the programme had engaged 1,575 older people in group awareness sessions, 278 in one-to-one awareness sessions and 59 victims of scams in one-to-one support sessions. This exceeds the target set for group awareness sessions for the life of the programme (February 2018 to January 2019), though is behind target for the other two components.

Findings so far indicate that the intended outcomes for beneficiaries are being achieved, in relation to knowledge, confidence and reporting of scams.

Scams knowledge

Overall, 92% of 556 beneficiaries who completed feedback surveys, reported that the support they received had increased their knowledge about scams and made them more aware of how they could be scammed.

Spotting and avoiding scams

87% of survey respondents reported feeling more confident that they could spot a scam, with 90% reporting that they were more confident about being able to take action to avoid being scammed.

Reporting Scams

89% of survey respondents reported that they would now be more likely to report a scam. 89% also reported that they now knew how to report a scam, and those we spoke with gave examples of the organisations to which they would report different types of scams.

Feeling safe

86% reported feeling safer now that they were more aware of all the different types of scams. This was due to their increased confidence in being able to spot and avoid scams.

Other outcomes

Engagement in the scams service also resulted in examples of:

- older people finding out about other Age UK services and support such as benefit checks, handyperson services and regular social groups
- peer to peer support amongst group members at community events
- older people accessing support and services provided by other organisations such as Trading Standards, Citizens Advice and community police.

Key plans for year next year:

The final evaluation report will be available in June 2019 and this will include full data for the duration of the project and interviews with community partners and stakeholders. Recommendations on future partnerships will be explored fully in the final report. Senior leaders at Age UK have recognised the impact the programme has had on the lives of older people, many of whom are most in need of support. Consequently, Age UK is making plans to roll out the programme further later this year.

Comments/conclusion:

The project got off to a slow start as there were some challenges experienced in the partnership between Age UK and Action Fraud primarily relating to data protection and the referral process. As a result, this impacted on beneficiary numbers particularly at level 3. However, local Age UK partners were very proactive in seeking their own referrals to counter this and the high standard of service delivery from them has been excellent.

At this stage in the evaluation the evidence strongly demonstrates that, in the short term, the programme generates the intended outcomes related to scams awareness and knowledge, confidence in spotting and avoiding scams and reporting scams. The next stage of the evaluation will have a key focus on the extent to which these outcomes are sustained by clients in the longer term.