

# LEARNING VISIT REPORT

## Attend 13138

<b>1.1 Date of visit:</b> August 14 <sup>th</sup> 2017	<b>1.2 Name of visiting Grants Officer:</b> Kate Moralee	<b>1.3 People met with:</b> Stephen Moreton
<b>1.4 Programme Area &amp; Outcomes:</b> Older Londoners: people living with Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia having a better quality of life		
<b>1.5 Purpose of the award:</b> £120,000 over three years towards the part-time salary and associated running costs of a Friends of Dementia Project Lead, to strengthen the links between care home residents with dementia and their local community.		
<b>MONITORING INFORMATION</b>		
<b>2.1 Project Outcome 1:</b> Enhanced wellbeing, dignity and respect for care home residents living with dementia, helping them to age successfully and to create a culture of integrated and holistic care. <b>Progress made:</b> Evaluation of the work to date has evidenced the following: people with dementia say they are less lonely; people with dementia have more choice in their daily lives; staff report that people with dementia are less agitated and sleep better when they are more stimulated during the day. In addition, relatives report that family members living with dementia seem happier and also report increased trust in volunteers (as well as being more willing to take a break when a volunteer befriender is around).		
<b>2.2 Project Outcome 2:</b> Supporting volunteers to engage with people living with dementia in meaningful ways, creating positive experiences for volunteers and residents. <b>Progress made:</b> Attend has designed and piloted volunteer training with 81 people. Services developed to date include a trolley service and a sitting service for end of life care.		
<b>2.3 Project Outcome 3:</b> Relatives of residents living with dementia will feel supported in their own journey and have increased levels of involvement with their loved ones' care. <b>Progress made:</b> Attend has formed committees in each of the homes involving residents, relatives, and local community. This has increased the active engagement of friends and relatives in residents' lives and enabled residents to keep in contact with family.		
<b>2.4 Project Outcome 4:</b> The wider community will develop its capacity to engage with older people living with dementia on a practical level. <b>Progress made:</b> Homes have engaged with at least 5 community organisations with at least one community challenge in each home. Activities organised include sessions from a		

specialist arts organisation offering physical activity and music. Attend note that finding and developing "leaders" who can encourage community involvement can be challenging. Conversely care homes can be cynical about the motives of the community. The role of Attend as a buffer between the two has proved to be critical in sustaining the project at various points. Attend is therefore learning that it needs to run the programme as a 'community engagement' initiative, rather than as a 'volunteering' initiative, with the community having a much greater say in the extent of their involvement. This has a mixed reception from care homes.

### **GRANT OFFICER COMMENTS**

Given the challenges faced in delivering this project Attend has responded with creativity to ensure outcomes are met and the projects are sustainable in their local community. Attend has fine-tuned its delivery model and the Charity Commission has expressed an interest in this model of community engagement.

It takes a significant amount of time to build trust between the home and the community. In terms of strategy, success depends on the community being both willing and glad to get involved in the life of the care home. This has required a more iterative approach:

- Engaging with local community groups/organisations
- Exploring potential projects they would like to undertake
- Obtaining the support of the care home for these projects
- Locating/fundraising for the resources to run the projects

This is a different approach to that which was originally envisaged and Attend are now beginning to build up a picture of what works and why this works, along with a portfolio of projects and initiatives that can inform initial discussions with community groups. This is based on the learning that building a sense of community rather than providing volunteering opportunities is critical to the success of this project.

Attend reported that the greatest challenge it faced was to build and maintain enthusiasm with care home staff during the period of time taken to recruit volunteers. To address this Attend began to use a public and private approach, with care home staff just finding out about the project when volunteers are available to start. This approach alongside having discussions with the local community earlier helps to create local ownership of the project and reduces support required from Head Office.

Attend has robust outcome measurement methods including questionnaires based on My Whole Life and Sheffield Hallam's Six Senses framework. This provides a robust framework to measure the outcomes of their interventions.

Attend recognises the external challenges facing the care sector. It has first-hand experience of the closure of two care homes with which they were working. Attend recognises that the sector is focussed on personal care rather than health and wellbeing with slow progress being made to a change in emphasis. Attend reported it felt the infrastructure support for volunteering has reduced over recent years.