

UNITED KINGDOM

Local development

Location

Park, Co Derry, N. Ireland

Programming period

2014 – 2020

Priority

P6 – Social inclusion & local development

Measure

M7 – Basic services & village renewal

Funding (GBP)

Total budget 26 672.27
EAFRD 5 401.13
National/Regional 14 603.06
Private 2 502.86
Other 4 165.22

Project duration

2017 – 2018

Project promoter

Learmount Community
Development Group Ltd

Contact

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Website

n/a

A community centre used support from the rural development programme to enhance its services and premises in order not to exclude people with Dementia.

Summary

The Community Resource Centre in Park is a not-for-profit project which provides services such as a post office, a lunch club, IT training, a hairdresser and classes on a variety of topics (knitting, cooking, yoga, languages, history etc). The project was needed to ensure new and existing services meet the needs of the entire community, including those who suffer from Dementia or Alzheimer.



The physical renovation of the facility included incorporating interior and exterior signage throughout the centre, redecorating walls and curtains and remove pattern prints and dark colours to improve clarity of vision for those with Dementia, replacing kitchen cabinets to include Perspex (a shatter-resistant alternative to glass) to allow people to easily locate kitchen utensils, modernising its IT facilities.

Results

These enhancements have enabled everyone using the premises to feel included, ensuring the most vulnerable people in the community are not isolated. Approximately 700 people use the facility on a regular basis.

The service now runs a Dementia Social Morning for families living with dementia. There are 160 direct and indirect users.

Dementia training has been ongoing at the Learmount Centre over the past two years. They have held approx. four training sessions with 20 people in attendance.

Lessons & Recommendations

- ❑ This people-led project is so successful because the project holder listened to the needs of the local community and tailored this project to address those identified needs.
- ❑ The impact of such a small investment has been huge (£20k grant approx.) and proves that a small amount of funding can make a real difference to a rural community.
- ❑ This project is highly transferable to other rural areas, and the project holder believes it could be replicated across the EU.

Context

The Community Resource Centre in Park is a not-for-profit project which provides services such as a post office, a lunch club, IT training, a hairdresser and classes on a variety of topics (knitting, cooking, yoga, languages, history etc).

The concept evolved when organisers noticing that some of their regular clients were missing their class. This started a conversation and from there it was determined that those service users who had been missing classes had been recently diagnosed with Alzheimer's or Dementia.

Organisers wanted to ensure that everyone who wanted to access services felt they could participate, including those with Alzheimer's or Dementia.

Objectives

The objectives of the project were to:

- Ensure new and existing services meet the needs of the entire community, including those who suffer from Dementia or Alzheimer's.
- Provide a safe environment for individuals who suffer from Dementia to partake in activities e.g. music, art therapy etc.
- Support carers and families of those who live with Dementia as well as the person who suffers from the disease.
- Enable people with dementia to retain as much independence and quality of life as possible in terms of accessing services such as GP clinic, post office, weekly luncheon club and citizens advice.

Activities

The physical renovation of the facility included the following activities:

- Incorporating interior and exterior signage throughout the centre to enable people with Dementia to navigate with ease.
- Redecorate walls and curtains and remove pattern prints and dark colours. This improves clarity of vision for those with Dementia.
- Replace kitchen cabinets to include Perspex (a shatter-resistant alternative to glass) to allow people to easily locate kitchen utensils.

- Modernisation of IT facilities to equip statutory agencies and other service providers with the appropriate technology to provide training and educational workshops.
- Landscaping of exterior grounds to incorporate an enclosed green space - providing a safe outdoor environment.



In conjunction with the monthly café a wide range of dementia related services were introduced, they are designed to support families and carers of dementia sufferers. These services/activities include:

- Daily support for families through listening services-encouraging positive mental health and well-being within the community
- Weekly signposting services to link people with non-medical sources of support
- Quarterly educational workshops for local businesses and the community
- A four to six-week programme which provides guidance and information on finances and creating dementia friendly homes
- Bi-monthly support group meetings facilitated by the Alzheimer's Society
- Bi-annual fundraising activities

The group also created a volunteer car scheme offering transport to people who live in isolated dwellings and have no access to a private car or public transport.

As the only Dementia friendly community centre within a 15-mile radius the group also focused on increasing awareness of their project in areas such as; Claudy, Feeny, Cranagh, Plumbridge, Aughbrack and Donemana to encourage people from those surrounding communities to use the services.

Main Results

The activities/ services carried out by the project are all now considered dementia friendly. These enhancements have enabled everyone using the premises to feel included, ensuring the most vulnerable people in the community are not isolated. This has had a significant impact on the lives of those affected by dementia as well as their families and carers. Approximately 700 people use the facility on a regular basis.

The service now runs a Dementia Social Morning for families living with dementia. There are 160 direct and indirect users.

Dementia training has been ongoing at the Learmount Centre over the past two years. They have held four training sessions with 20 people attendees.

Funding received via RDP was to enhance community facilities to ensure they were Dementia friendly. Although the application focussed on dementia the building is a community hub providing essential services in a rural area i.e. GP outreach service, post office service, mother & toddler group, park playgroup, luncheon club, park & district farming association, Learmount Youth etc.

Therefore, everyone in the local area benefited from the enhancement.

As a result of the improvements made to the service the project was able to secure further funding through the UK National Lottery to deliver additional weekly programme of activity for those with Dementia. The programme which started in February 2019, will run for three years. It will be delivered in partnership with the Old Library Trust and cater for up to 10 participants.

Key lessons

This people-led project is so successful because the project holder listened to the needs of the local community and tailored this project to address those identified needs.

The impact of such a small investment has been huge (£20k grant approximately) and proves that a small amount of funding can make a real difference to a rural community.

This project is highly transferable to other rural areas, and the project holder believes it could be replicated across the EU.

Additional sources of information

n/a