

Elderly People's Needs - Case Study

Our experience of working with communities and local partnerships shows that by taking a wider view your partnership can quickly make a real impact



In the summer of 2009 Aperia worked with South Lakeland District Council and its partners to further look at the needs of the elderly. This work took forward the findings of an earlier Aperia project in

South Lakeland which captured the needs of older people through a combination of focus group work, interviews and workshops to produce a Circle of Need for older people. That first project made a number of recommendations for improvement of access to services for the elderly and South Lakeland worked with Aperia and the Government Connect Programme to develop a more multi-agency model of services delivered to meet the needs of the elderly. This case study describes how the Government Connect Secure eXtranet (GCSX) is supporting a number of organisations who are working together in South Lakeland in Cumbria to improve access to services for older people.

Older People are a particularly important demographic in South Lakeland where 27% of the population is aged over 60 compared with the national average of 21% based upon the 2001 Census. Working with focus groups of older people in South Lakeland, the District Council, Cumbria County Council, Cumbria PCT, Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service, Cumbria Police, Age Concern and The Pension Service undertook a "needs assessment" in 2008 to understand the issues and priorities for older people in the area.

The results were startling. 47 services were mapped to just two of the ten categories of need. These two needs were:

- 'Adequate Protective Housing'.
- 'Adequate healthcare'.

Whilst this positively demonstrates the range of support available for older people, it also shows that access to these services is a real problem due to a lack of effective information sharing between the organisations that deliver them. This issue was recently articulated well in a recent article about older people in the Guardian newspaper.

"Public services may be more efficient, but all too often they are not joined up, leaving the people on the receiving end bewildered by what one elderly woman, who was being visited by four occupational therapists, described to me as a blizzard of services".

Through the creation of a hypothetical older person, called "Ethel", Aperia discovered that access to these 47 services entailed working through:

- 44 leaflets
- 22 application forms which would lead to:
 - 28 entitlement checks (often including proof of identity or address)
 - 22 assessments of the scale or quantity of contribution (often including health or means related information)

Aside from this, a review of the data sets captured in the application forms showed that **71% of all the information required for all the forms was captured in the most commonly used form. 95% of the data required was captured in just two of the most commonly used forms.**

The potential to improve this was clear – to share information more effectively and improve services for older people, public sector organisations require an infrastructure which supports the secure exchange of information.

Requirement for improved information sharing

The partners in South Lakeland are used to working closely together and already share some information; however, this occurs largely by fax and letter in the absence of a secure electronic means.

Examples include:

- Adult social care sharing information on people at risk with the Health sector, Fire and Rescue Service and Police
- Close working between County and District in a number of areas including housing and adult social care
- Age Concern capturing welfare service information and passing it to the DWP local office.

In order to improve the joining up of services around the needs of citizens a structured, secure and efficient system for sharing information needs to be available.

“The Older People’s Programme in South Lakeland understands the enormous potential for both service improvement and efficiency that can come from joining up access to services. Sharing information more effectively is at the heart of this and whilst it is something that we do already, we need to do it in a more structured and holistic way. Aperia helped us create a real opportunity to do this and are continuing to help us focus more on the other aspects of people, process and technology that we need to address.

Carole Wood, Cumbria PCT, Chair Older People Programme

Let’s have a conversation

Please give us a call or email us if you would like one of our team to chat with you about Circles of Need® to see if we can help your organisation transform the customer experience AND save money.



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