

## Sporting Memories Network

# Increasing wellbeing through sporting reminiscence

Reminiscing about great sporting moments and heroes re-ignites conversation and camaraderie in men living with dementia in care homes. Care staff and able residents enjoyed developing materials and facilitating these meaningful and joyful activities.

### Background

It is increasingly understood that by providing stimulating activities for residents in care it is possible to enhance their wellbeing. It is also a means of establishing the kind of rapport that lies at the heart of effective person-centred care. Sporting Memories Network was keen to develop an activity which focused on reminiscence about sport and trial this in a number of care homes in Leeds.

By using a subject which has common currency with so many people and especially men, who can often be harder to engage in a care setting, Sporting Memories created a project that would put the voice and memories of residents at the centre of an activity that could involve staff, volunteers, carers and residents. The network developed the sporting reminiscence training and support materials on the back of an earlier project which focused more narrowly on reminiscence about football.

Sporting Memories Network had suffered a disappointment when they narrowly missed securing funding through the Silver Dreams Lottery fund for a larger scale project in Leeds, Newcastle and London. When the team learned of the opportunities available through a Workforce Development Innovation Fund award, they scaled down the project to focus on the provision of sporting reminiscence in 15 care homes in Leeds.

### What we wanted to achieve

The key to the project was to train a number of facilitators who, using a range of specially created support materials, would engage with residents in sporting reminiscence activities and this would help improve their wellbeing. The activity sessions are aimed to engage various residents including those living with dementia.

An especially innovative factor in the project was that some more able residents could also be trained as facilitators as the project was designed to be scalable by using a cascade model, providing all the necessary training tools and support materials for facilitators. Among the general business benefits was the opportunity to engage volunteers, carers and residents in a rewarding and sustainable activity, and cost reduction as a result of the benefits of improved wellbeing. Eventually it was hoped that the project might result in a reduction in the use of anti-psychotic and anti-depressant drugs.

## What we did

Sporting Memories Network set out to create all the necessary support materials and to engage 15 care homes in Leeds in the project. The support materials included the Sporting Reminiscence Guide, the Sporting Pink Reminiscence Newspaper and Replay England Football Legends pack with 72 players. These resources used iconic sporting images designed to create visual impact to spur engagement and activity.

Once the 15 care homes that wished to take part in the project were identified, Sporting Memories Network developed pen portraits of each home. These are short written descriptions about the home, its facilities, any comments from Care Quality Commission inspections and also from residents to provide an overall sense of the character of the home. Their purpose was to understand the context in which the sporting reminiscence was taking place and to plan the formative evaluation after training, when Sporting Memories Network could ask managers general and specific questions about how the sporting reminiscence sessions had worked for them.

With the exception of one home, each home involved in the project sent two delegates to the training sessions so that a total of 29 people learned how to become facilitators. Training involved explaining the principles of sporting reminiscence using case studies as a means of illustrating the process. The initial training sessions were themselves used to test the content and style of the training which gradually developed to include more information on the benefits of reminiscence, involving practical examples and plenty of discussion. In each case trainers explained how the programme could be tailored to suit the needs and interests of residents.

One aspect which Sporting Memories Network was keen to explore was whether the training could be applied to people who had little personal interest in sport. Several trainees were included in this category. The feedback from trainees was that the guides and supporting materials were easy to follow and use in subsequent sessions and that non-sporting facilitators were able to conduct the reminiscence activities just as well as those with greater sporting histories or involvement.

Project Lead Tony Jameson-Allen explains, “Once we had designed the materials we needed and the kind of training required for facilitators we were keen to generate support from Leeds City Council and from the city sporting bodies. We explained to them the principles of the programme and were quick to receive their full endorsement. We drew a great deal of press interest not only regionally but nationally. We have received tremendous assistance from a large sporting image archive which enables us to source and create many of our materials.”

## What we achieved

Feedback from the care homes indicated that the project was achieving all its aims. For example, from an interim survey sent to all homes, one respondent had already run four sessions involving two to five people who had found the reminiscence sessions to be a meaningful activity, particularly helpful “in bringing chaps together” for discussions. They had more sessions planned for the near future.

“All the main Leeds-based NHS and social care organisations, plus Leeds Cricket, Rugby and of course Leeds United Foundations became really interested in the project.”

Tony Jameson-Allen, Project Lead

“Leeds has football, cricket and rugby but to adapt this project for other regions, one would probably need to be much more locality-specific when considering what the local sports in the area or region are and having the resource materials to reflect this”

Tony Jameson-Allen, Project Lead

Managers have reported that the guides and other resources were well designed and easy to use and that residents and their relatives enjoyed conversations centred on sporting heroes, teams, events and venues with the result that there was an improved sense of wellbeing among participants.

Sporting Memories Network has gained considerable support at local, regional and national level as a result of the project, demonstrating its scalability. Partnerships have been created with archives, museums, sporting bodies, health and social care organisations, charities and media groups. The network has been commissioned to create projects for different types of organisations, including care homes, by five councils across the country. Sporting Memories Network was listed as the match sponsor of the first ever football memories game, designed to raise awareness of dementia, which was a football league match between Huddersfield Town and Derby County.

The network even received a letter from the Prime Minister including two favourite sporting reminiscences and inviting the team to co-chair a meeting with Norman Lamb, the Minister of State for Care and Support to examine the role of football and sport in tackling the Prime Minister's Dementia Challenge. Sporting Memories was subsequently involved in the first premier league memories game which took place between Everton and Stoke City.

## What we learnt

According to Tony Jameson-Allen, the project was a means of test driving, developing and refining the resource materials and the training process itself. One theme that emerged was that the training and resource materials were focused initially too much on football and it was important to ensure that other sports were properly represented.

Sporting Memories also adapted the training itself so that rather than just using sports as a focus for reminiscence participants can be eased into the programme using more general pictures and conversations about, for example, summer holidays in the 1950s and 60s. Feedback from home managers confirmed that the information contained in the sporting reminiscence guide itself covered the right mix of elements.

The support, engagement and interest in the project from Leeds City Council, NHS Leeds, Leeds Care Association and all the city's professional sports clubs was an unexpected by-product. This opened new opportunities to raise the profile of the project across the city and far beyond.

## For more information please contact

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## Skills for Care Recommends

Skills for Care has helped to develop qualifications for those delivering care to people with learning disabilities, as well as opportunities to reclaim some of the cost.

### Common Core Principles for supporting people with Dementia

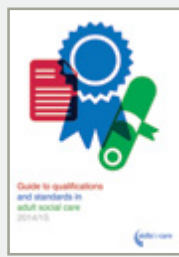


We have produced a guide which supports the social care and health workforce to care for

people with dementia. Employers should use the principles as part of their development plans to improve the experience of those with dementia and their carers.

[www.skillsforcare.org.uk/dementia](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/dementia)

### Guide to qualifications in adult social care



We have developed a Level 2 and 3 qualifications in both Dementia Care and Activity Provision, as well

as ensuring there is a Dementia pathway as part of the Diplomas in Health and Social Care.

[www.skillsforcare.org.uk/qualifications](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/qualifications)

### Funding

For adult social care employers in England, our funding can help towards the cost of learning and development for learning disabilities.

[www.skillsforcare.org.uk/funding](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/funding)

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