

NICE PUBLIC HEALTH GUIDANCE

Independence and mental wellbeing (including social and emotional wellbeing) for older people: Call for Evidence

From 21 March 2014 – 25 April 2014
Evidence to be submitted by Friday 25 April 2014

PUBLISHED EVIDENCE SUBMISSION FORM

- When submitting evidence that is published please provide reference details (which are to include author/s, title, date, journal or publication details including volume and issue number and page numbers)
- Comments forms with attachments such as research articles, letters or leaflets will not be accepted. If comments forms do have attachments they will be returned without being read. If the stakeholder resubmits the form without attachments, it must be by the consultation deadline.

Stakeholder Organisation	Evidence Submission (Details of evidence that relates to the questions. Please specify which question you are referring to)	Full Reference (E.g. Author, date of publication, full title of paper/report and where can a copy be obtained from)
Living Streets 4 th Floor Universal House, 88-94 Wentworth Street London E1 7SA	<p>In a research briefing on preventing loneliness and social isolation, the Social Care Institute for Excellence (2012)ⁱ highlighted the following key messages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Older people are particularly vulnerable to social isolation and loneliness owing to loss of friends and family, mobility or income. • Social isolation and loneliness have a detrimental effect on health and wellbeing. Studies show that being lonely or isolated can impact on blood pressure, and is closely linked to depression. • The impact of loneliness and social isolation on an 	<p>ⁱSCie (2012). <i>Research briefing 39 ‘Preventing loneliness and isolation: interventions and outcomes’</i></p> <p>ⁱⁱAdams, E.J., Goad, M.A. & Cavill, N. (2012) Evaluation of Living Streets’ Fitter for Walking project. BHF National Centre for Physical Activity and Health, School of Sport, Exercise and Health Sciences, Loughborough University, Loughborough, UK</p> <p>ⁱⁱⁱSustrans (May 2012) Living Streets Fitter for Walking: pledge follow-up</p>

The publication of comments received during the consultation process on the NICE website is made in the interests of openness and transparency in the development of our guidance recommendations. It does not imply they are endorsed by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence or its officers or its advisory committees

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	<p>individual's health and wellbeing has cost implications for health and social care services. Investment is needed to ensure that voluntary organisations can continue to help alleviate loneliness and improve the quality of life of older people, reducing dependence on more costly services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of interventions for alleviating loneliness and social isolation can be grouped into one-to-one interventions, group services and wider community engagement.” <p>Living Streets engages with communities to promote walking. Something as simple as a trip to the shops is also an opportunity for older people to be physically active and to meet or chat with friends, neighbours and shopkeepers. On the other hand, barriers to walking, such as poorly maintained pavements, poor lighting, street clutter, and the absence of places to sit and rest can increase people's perceptions of risk (e.g. of trips and falls) and severely curtail individuals' independence.</p> <p>Effectiveness of interventions</p> <p>Social isolation amongst older people is one of the key issues of our time. It is addressed through a range of measures that range from buddying schemes, community based social events, volunteering opportunities to age-friendly designed housing. However, initiatives such as these could be significantly enhanced by breaking down the barriers which prevent older people engaging more readily in walking for utility purposes (active travel). Older people who feel confident walking in their neighbourhoods are better able to take advantage of the opportunities available to them.</p> <p>Living Streets' Community Street Audits are a proven approach to engaging communities to think about how their neighbourhoods can be improved for walking. Residents identify problems and solutions to walking, through facilitated audits of particular routes. Bringing together people who live in a neighbourhood with those who manage their streets leads to often low cost, effective improvements, such as</p>	<p>summary. Bristol, UK. ^{iv}Asher, L. <i>et al</i> (2012). 'Most older pedestrians are unable to cross the road in time: a cross-sectional study', <i>Journal of Age and Ageing</i>, Vol 0: 1–5.</p>
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new dropped kerbs, improved street lighting, resurfacing of paths and the removal of encroaching vegetation. The results have a knock on effect not just on walking, but on residents' feeling part of a community.

Our award winning Fitter For Walking (FFW) project supported by a £1.7M grant from the Big Lottery Fund's Wellbeing Fund and evaluated by Adams *et al.* (2012)ⁱⁱ revealed the strong social motivations and impacts of walking – for example, follow-up surveys of individual and family pledges reported 68 per cent of individuals feeling fitter and 59 per cent indicating that they had more contact with people in their neighbourhoodⁱⁱⁱ. In five FFW neighbourhood projects (out of a total of 40) there was a particular focus on elderly people and these were particularly successful. For example:

- In Marks Gate, Barking and Dagenham, a 'young at heart' group signed up to the project and raised the issue of a local subway as a barrier, and pavement parking. This led to significant improvements to this route, which has benefited the whole community.
- In Highfield, Gateshead, we established links with the 'healthy Highfield' project focusing on elderly people. 50 people signed walking pledges at an international women's day event, ranging from newly retired women pledging to join walking groups to more frail women pledging to walk a few doors down the street to see their friend rather than use the telephone. Testimonials show how motivated and liberated they were by this extra push to keep active.

We are currently delivering a new project (also funded by Big Lottery) in Doncaster and Rotherham, called Streets Apart, which is aimed specifically at meeting the needs of older people using the same methodology. As part of this project we have run national campaigns focusing on the barriers faced by older people (and people with disabilities). Our 'Give Us Time to Cross' campaign is a

great example of how we have translated issues raised by residents into national action. Supported the work of Asher *et al.* (2012), who concluded that the majority older adults cannot walk fast enough to use pedestrian crossings in the UK^{iv}, we are calling on the Government to update its guidance and reduce the assumed walking speed from 1.2 m/s to 0.8 m/s.

Cost effectiveness, resource use and outcomes

Community Street Audits are an effective (and cost effective) method of delivering community-based increases in walking for local trips. The walking pledge system developed as part of FFW has also proved highly effective at encouraging behaviour change. The follow up survey results mentioned above were backed up at 6 month intervals (figures relate to all adult age groups, but over 55s provided one of the highest response rates).

The FFW approach provided a focus on improving health by encouraging increased physical activity, together with increasing residents' empowerment by improving their local walking environment. In Streets Apart we have included to a specific element of outreach work to ensure that we involve older people and listen to their views. In doing so we are reducing their social isolation by linking them with local groups and initiatives.

This kind of joined up approach is particularly relevant now that local authorities are responsible for public health alongside existing responsibilities, such as transport infrastructure.