

50plus Nottinghamshire

LinkAge Plus

First Contact

First Contact enables older people to access services through a single point of contact.

One simple checklist enables people aged over 60 to receive vital services to stay safe and independent in their own homes. An older person can receive a whole host of services without going to the trouble of contacting all of the various different organisations themselves.

First Contact

Activity

If a staff member from any of the partner agencies visits someone at home, such as a firefighter, police officer or volunteer, they complete a checklist to find out if the older person has any other particular needs for:

- fire safety check;
- home security check;
- home repairs or mobility adaptations;
- energy saving improvements to keep warm and reduce energy bills;
- confidential advice on money entitlements;
- signposting to local voluntary and community groups and clubs;
- advice on types of housing accommodation that may be available.

Responses to the checklist are fed back to one central point of contact where staff co-ordinate the responses of partner organisations. A representative from the organisation will then visit the older person to discuss what might be available.

- Total benefit arrears paid out weekly = £25,000.
- Total additional benefit awards paid out = £1,261,000.
- Good role model for partnerships.

Wider achievements

- IDEA exemplar.
- Helps to meet partners' priorities.
- Raises awareness of what's available for partners and service users.

The scheme meets many promotion/dissemination needs of partners.

The case study below demonstrate the wider achievements of the First Contact scheme.

*'The sun was shining on me the day I walked into *****. I can't believe how my life has changed. You really made me happy'.*

These were the comments made by a 67 year old woman living on her own who was contacted after an outreach in the foyer of a small supermarket in Mansfield. As a result referrals were made via the First Contact Signposting Scheme. This resulted in her getting Pension Credit and Attendance Allowance. She obtained information about transport to make her more independent, as well as input from the Fire Service (smoke alarm and HRA) and advice from the police regarding home security. Her independence and well being were sent soaring as a result of the help she received.

Resources

- The scheme needs to employ coordinators for training and promotion/liaison.
- The referrals need to be processed through a central unit such as a contact centre.

Key lessons learned

- Older people want a single point of contact.
- Professionals who visit people at home can be trained to make effective referrals for other services and activities.
- A single point of access meets the referral requirements of many public authorities such as The Pension Service, Housing Benefit, Council Tax Benefit and Primary Care Trusts, as well as the voluntary sector.
- The Community Outreach Advisors are a perfect companion for the First Contact Scheme.

Further information

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Ref to website: www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/home/social_care/notts50plus.htm

Related documents

First Contact Signposting Scheme District Information

Self Assessment Scheme

