

# ***"Someone Like Me" !***

Senior Peer Mentors Promoting  
Physical Activity with Older People

*A national programme and a partnership  
between Ageing Well UK and the British Heart  
Foundation National Centre for  
Physical Activity and Health.*

Network update

February 2005



department for  
**education and skills**  
creating opportunity, releasing potential, achieving excellence



**Welcome to this update for the  
“Someone Like Me Project !”**

**This is the fifth in a series of regular updates which will keep all those involved in the learning network up to date with the work of the programme.**

**In this update we are releasing details of**

- 1. New ! – 2004 Programme review – what did we learn ?**
- 2. New ! Details of the 2005 – programme of courses for those interested in Someone Like Me ! and educational materials**
- 3. New ! – Update of evidence relating to volunteer mentoring programmes**
- 4. New ! Opportunities to become further involved in the programme as a national trainer.**
- 5. What’s in a name ?**
- 6. New local programmes**
- 7. National initiatives to highlight this work**
- 8. Other useful information**

## 1. 2004 Programme review – what did we learn ?

***Following two years of joint working, the BHF National Centre for Physical Activity and Health at Loughborough University and the ActivAge Unit, Age Concern England undertook an assessment of the impact of the Someone Like Me! programme.***

The purpose of the impact assessment was to

- a) establish the number, status and scope of local programmes
- b) Assess the impact of different local programmes
- c) enhance the knowledge of those in the Someone Like Me ! information network

with the purpose of sharing information and identifying future training and development needs and establishing the case for future development. The review looked at the development of over 20 local programmes and as a result, we are providing details of

- Changes to the content of the 2005 – 6 training programme for local coordinators and trainers.
- New and revised educational materials for those in local programmes
- Further evidence of effectiveness of local programmes

### ***Key lessons from the review***

The following have been identified as the top 10 key areas of learning from programmes currently involved in the “Someone Like Me” Programme. They are seen as essential to the successful planning of any local programme.

- Ensure that there is clarity for all concern concerning the role of the Senior Peer Activity Motivator, it’s potential and limitations.
- Link local programmes to mainstream national and local health and physical activity promotion to ensure long term sustainable programme development. This is not a bolt on project

- Ensure the work is strategically linked to the priorities of all programme partners and their priorities.
- Key human resources and experience that must be committed to each local programme include those associated with the key areas - those of :- working with older people, physical activity, health promotion, education and training and working with volunteers
- Anticipate at least a 18 month planning cycle for a local programme.
- Be prepared to incorporate the skills and experiences that older people bring with them to local programmes
- Trainers need to respond to specific requests for information from Senior Peer Activity Motivators reflecting a wide range of older people's needs and interests and anticipate a demand for additional and progressive education and training.
- Support strategies must be included within initial programme planning and need to be clear, pro-active as well as responsive and include additional education and training needs.
- Negotiate assessment and evaluation activities with participants, Senior Peer Activity motivators and all programme partners.
- Senior Peer Activity Motivators remain loyal to local programmes. Few leave, mainly the result of changes to their own health and the desire to become more fully involved in teaching/leading physical activity programmes.

## **2. Details of the 2005 – 6 programme of courses for those interested in Someone Like Me !**

***The following courses and activities are currently planned for the Spring and Summer of 2005. Later Life Training Ltd now provide a choice of three different training activities and courses to meet local professional needs.***

## Introduction

Planning and implementing a Senior Peer Physical Activity Motivator Programme comprises a number of different elements. These include programme planning, recruitment and training of potential Senior Peer Activity Motivators and implementation including the support of mentors and evaluation as they work in the local community. Later Life Training Ltd now provide a choice of **three** different training activities and courses to meet local professional needs.

### Course 1. Planning a local Senior Peer Activity Motivator Programme

*this course designed for **potential local programme co-ordinators and partners** and provides a step by step approach to the planning of a local programme with local partners, the recruitment and support of mentors as well as the resourcing and evaluation of programmes.*

### Course 2. Cascade training for local programme trainers

*- this course is designed for those who are in a position to **undertake the local training of Senior Peer Activity Motivators** and will include a cascade approach to training, comprising the planning and delivery of local training events.*

**NB We recommend that a coordinators course should precede course 2 Cascade training for Potential Senior Peer Activity Motivators**

### Course 3. Bespoke training for local partnerships and stakeholders.

*- these courses are designed for local partnerships and stakeholders to facilitate the planning of a specific local programme*

**Further details of these courses, content, dates, venues and materials can be found at [www.laterlifetraining.co.uk](http://www.laterlifetraining.co.uk)**

## **New training materials**

Our review also looked at the range and quality of our training materials used to support local programmes. Many of these materials have been built up over a period of time and lacked compatibility and identity. Consequently, these materials have been redesigned and reformatted as follows:-

- A training and resource manual for local programme coordinators and partners
- A training and resource manual for Cascade trainers
- A revised support pack for Senior Peer Activity Motivators

Some of these materials will remain on our website at [www.bhfactive.org.uk](http://www.bhfactive.org.uk) but these new materials will be available for the programme of courses in the Spring and Summer of 2005.

## **3. Update of evidence relating to volunteer mentoring programmes**

### **Is it effective, does it work ?**

Local programmes will identify their own criteria for success and impact . However, the examples included below indicate both the nature of evidence that can be collected about successful programmes as well as the way in which programmes can be used to target different groups of older people.

*There is growing evidence that such programmes can be very effective in helping older people to make decisions about their own health and become more physically active. There is also evidence of the benefits to those involved in volunteering and mentoring.*

### **Ageing Well and Healthily in the Netherlands**

The Ageing Well and Healthily (AWH) programme in the Netherlands consists of health education by peers and low intensity exercise taught by a professional physical activity

instructor. Similar to the USA CHAMPs programme in design AWH looked to link new participants into existing local opportunities for activity and exercise. Peer educators reported a number of outcomes including positive effects upon physical perception and on attitudes towards physical activity especially among less physically active individuals. They also reported that a strong group feeling emerged and there was also interest in other topics such as mental health, social security and legal matters. The educational materials that were provided were also well received.

Further details in

Hopman-Rock, M. and Westhoff, M.J. (2002) Development and Evaluation of “Ageing Well and Healthily”: a Health-Education and Exercise Program for Community Living Older Adults. In the Journal of Aging and Physical Activity, 2002, 10, 364 – 381.

Hopman-Rock, M. and Westhoff, M.J. (2002) Dissemination and Implementation of “Ageing Well and healthy”; a Health-Education and Exercise Program for Older Adults. In the Journal of Aging and Physical Activity, 2002, 10, 382 - 395.

### **Bradford PCT and Positive Action on Falls prevention**

The pro-active ‘Positive Action on Falls’ programme was set up to benefit people of 65 years and over and living within the City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council’s boundary. The Falls Prevention Coordinator initiated the project. Its aims and rationale were specifically to raise awareness through a ‘one-off’ presentation giving information and some instruction in simple exercises. The programme used material from the DTI leaflet ‘Slips, Trips and Broken Hips’ and also reflected the general consensus emerging from the literature on the importance of maintaining balance and strength, as well as reviewing medication. Positive Action on Falls represented a novel approach to providing practical information to groups of older people using volunteer tutors - ‘peer mentors’ – delivering a set programme focussing on risk factors and simple exercise techniques. By September 2003 137 groups had been involved, representing around 2,200 people aged from 60 – 94 years. For more information an evaluation of this programme shortcut to:

<http://www.healthaction.nhs.uk/upload/public/attachments/22/PAFevaluation.pdf>

## **Kirklees Physical Activity Motivator Project**

Initiated in 2002, the aim of this project was to initiate a network of Physical Activity Motivators (PAMs) to support older people to become more active. Over a period of two years, some 60 PAMs have been trained. Many PAMs volunteer for a regular one hour session, once a week, but some are able to commit themselves to mentoring for 5 or more days a week.

Many PAMs have gone on to additional training, some of which is provided by Kirklees Metropolitan Council including, warm-up and cool down exercise techniques, self-awareness sessions, dignity and equality at work courses, techniques for circuit training, WHI Walk Leader Training (at least half now have this qualification) and other physical activity training.

PAMs work with newcomers to the local exercise referral programme and act as a buddy to them – assist them through the initial introductory stages of the programme, encourage, provide support and are a source of confidence as such programmes can be daunting for newcomers who can see others more able and confident than themselves. Mentees are also accompanied by PAMs after they have completed their 45 weeks for continued support and encouragement.

[For more details contact Department of Culture and Leisure Services, Stadium and Business Complex, Stadium Way, Huddersfield HU1 6PG or email \[michelle.bland@kirklees.gov.uk\]\(mailto:michelle.bland@kirklees.gov.uk\)](#)

## **Volunteering and improved health**

Among a number of studies reporting on the benefit of volunteering and mentoring upon the health of those involved as volunteers, Black and Living (2004) reported that volunteering appears to exert its' effects predominantly upon mental health. Engaging in a volunteer role may help to promote psychological well-being through providing opportunities to enhance positive effect and to gain experience and skills, helping to build confidence and self esteem. Volunteering also provided contact with other people and social support as well as opportunities for spiritual reflection and self-reflection upon purpose and meaning of life. It encouraged volunteers to feel part of community life and provide a replacement role or an additional role. These findings are supported by Garcia,

Metha, Perfect and McWhirter (1997) who also reported significant improvement to the mental health of volunteer counselors quoting the experience of learning and the trust and support of a group as well as increased self confidence and self efficacy.

Further details in

Black, W and Livin, R. (2004) Volunteerism as an Occupation and its relationship to health and wellbeing. British Journal of Occupational Therapy December 2004 67(12).

Garcia, Y.E., Metha, A., Perfect, MC and McWhirter, J.J. (1997) A Senior Peer Counselling Program: Evaluation of Training and Benefits to Counselors. In Educational Gerontology, 23: 329 - 334

#### **4. Opportunities to become further involved in the programme as a national trainer.**

***To further develop and sustain the Someone Like Me ! programme, the program partners are keen to extend the network of experienced national trainers who would like to assist this programme during it's next phase of development and contribute to the 2005 – 6 programme of courses***

If you are experienced in coordinating local programmes and the training of Senior Peer Activity Motivators and would like to undertake additional professional development, the **Someone Like Me** programme would like to hear from you.

We will provide preparation training and resources for your use.

Please direct initial requests for information to [bob.laventure@ntlworld.com](mailto:bob.laventure@ntlworld.com)

## 5. What's in a Name ?

*We don't mind if you want to give your participants and programmes other names. Many have, your Senior Peer Activity Motivators will want to give your programme a local identity so call it what you will.*

Whilst it is recognized that older people recognize the importance and authority of their GP in providing health information and advising on the benefits of physical activity, Senior Peer Mentoring is built around the opportunities for older people to advise other older people. Older people are most likely to listen to *Someone Like Me* who can offer time to talk and display an understanding of the many barriers to physical activity as well as provide a positive and realistic role model.

Senior Peer Health Mentoring are the terms we have applied to this work.

It is about Seniors – a term used (more often in North America) by the physical activity and exercise world to describe older people who take part in physical activity

It is about Peers - listening and talking to someone with similar life experiences, understanding and circumstances and of the same generation.

It is about Health - although there is ample evidence that older people perceive good health as **wellness** which has six components or dimensions. (see below)

### What is mentoring ?

“Mentoring is a **one to one, non-judgemental** relationship in which an individual mentor **voluntarily** gives time to **support and encourage** the other. This relationship is typically developed at a **time of transition** in the mentee's life, and lasts for a **significant and sustained period**”.

Active Community Unit (Home Office 2000)

**One to one** – although some mentors prefer to work with small groups of people (particularly at the outset of a programme), mentoring is most effective in a one to one situation where people can talk freely with a single person.

**Non-judgemental** – key to the qualities of a mentor is the fact that they do not pass judgement upon opinions expressed even when they are contrary to their own views.

**Voluntarily** – within this and many other programmes, mentoring is undertaken by volunteers. Similar activities, relating to helping people make decisions and possibly change their lives can also be undertaken by professionals, but often there are different values and motives involved.

**Support and encourage** – mentoring is about making an attempt to support people, especially when things go wrong and to encourage them, perhaps when they fail at the first or second attempt.

**Time of transition** – at certain times of life, people take the opportunity to take stock and review their experiences and circumstances. For an older person this may be moving house, “empty nesting”, bereavement or illness. The times of transition may provide opportunities to adopt new activities and lifestyles.

Significant and sustained period – local programmes will make their own decisions as to how long the mentoring process should be, both when things go well and well unsuccessful. Time will be needed in order to develop relationships, explore possibilities as well as trialling new activities and behaviours.

### **Programmes or projects ?**

The training of Senior Peer Activity Motivators is only one part of local development work that can target older people. Evidence from previous programmes highlights the importance of developing a programme over a **sustained period of time** in order to be able to ensure success. This involves a number of phases and components (described later). Projects are more suggestive of short term, one off and quick fix ideas.

### **Mentees**

This term refers to the participant (end user) in a mentoring programme, the person being mentored. Sometimes this is not always the most appropriate term as it suggests passivity or being a recipient. Good Senior Peer Mentoring will actively engage and involve the participant in identifying and meeting their own needs.

Mentoring is the role but:-

**Motivating and supporting other older people is *what they do***

**Buddies, companions and friends is *what they become***

In this programme we use the term Senior Peer Activity Motivator. That's a bit of a mouthful but it does make clear what the programme is about. Locally, we have [Physical Activity Motivators](#), [Get Moving Mentors](#), [Physical Activity Companions](#) and [Activity Friends](#)

We don't mind if you want to give your participants and programmes other names. Many have, your Senior Peer Activity Motivators will want to give your programme a local identity so call it what you will.

## **6. New local programmes**

Following planning and development work, new local Senior Peer Activity Motivator programmes are now off the ground in the following areas.

Bedford PCT  
Cambridge PCT  
Gateshead (Age Concern)  
Nottingham City LEAP  
Sutton in Ashfield, Notts  
East Cheshire (Age Concern)  
Go 50 Age Concern Surry

We will be working with these and other local programmes to continue to develop the evidence and learning base to underpin successful local programmes.

## 7. National initiatives to highlight this work

**Three national initiatives are in the pipeline that may provide additional opportunities to highlight your local programmes**

### 7.1 Adult Learners' Week – May 21<sup>st</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup> 2005

Adult learners week is the UK's largest festival and celebration of adult learning, co-ordinated by NIACE and core-funded by the DfES, ESF and learndirect.

Adult Learners' Week is an opportunity for adults to have a go at something new by trying out one of the hundreds of free taster sessions that happen across England during the week, and an opportunity for education providers to show adults what is on offer.

Throughout this Adult Learners' Week site, providers will find many things to help them make the most of this high profile, national campaign. It has been adopted locally and regionally across England for fourteen years with many great results.

Each year adult learners are recognised through the Adult Learners' Week Awards and their learning journeys are told through the media and other means of publicity. This is a great way of encouraging other adults to return to learn. Entry to the awards is closed for the 2005 awards but watch this site for the announcement of award winners at the beginning of May '05.

For details of the Adult Learners Week homepage go to [www.niace.org.uk](http://www.niace.org.uk)

### 7.2 2005 The Year of the Volunteer

1<sup>st</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> of June is Volunteers week as part of the 2005 Year of Volunteering. For details of this programme, funding and partners visit

[www.yearofthevolunteer.org](http://www.yearofthevolunteer.org)

Themed months for this initiative include March as the month for older people and August as the month for sport.

### 7.3 Falls Awareness Day - 19 July 2005

The first National Falls Awareness Day initiated by Help the Aged takes place on 19 July 2005 and aims to highlight the importance of reducing your chances of falling in later life. The theme for this year will be 'Be strong, Be steady', which is all about what you can do to maintain your independence.

The day's main messages:

- Falls do not have to be an inevitable part of getting older.
- You can reduce your risk of falling regardless of your age and state of health.
- It is never too late to start reducing your risk of a fall.

For details of National Falls Awareness Day visit

[http://www.helptheaged.org.uk/Health/HealthyAgeing/Falls/falls\\_awareness\\_day.htm](http://www.helptheaged.org.uk/Health/HealthyAgeing/Falls/falls_awareness_day.htm)

### 8. Other useful information

*The following recent publications may assist in providing a backdrop to local programmes. They provide ample evidence of the need to promote physical activity with older people.*

#### **Audit Commission**

*Older people – independence and well-being – The challenge for public services (2004)*

A major report on the implications of an ageing society, and how change will be managed. A series of five reports which highlight four key areas,

- What is independence?
- Dimensions of independence and well being
- Promoting independence and well being – the policy map
- Conclusions and next steps.

This provides very valuable background reading and information for all those involved in promoting physical activity and independence with older people.

Available at [www.audit-commission.gov.uk/olderpeople](http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/olderpeople)

### **White Paper - Choosing Health – Making healthier choices easier**

Following a consultation exercise (including consultation on Choosing Health – Choosing Activity, the Government launched it's white paper, Choosing Health in November 2004.

For those in the promotion of physical activity and the health of older people it is best described as a disaster and although there are a small number of case studies, reflecting the needs of this group, there are no actions described that would take this work forward. The White Paper refers to the review of the national Service Framework for Older People (published earlier in November 2004).

Accompanying papers included

***Summary of intelligence on accidents*** which includes references to the importance of specific tailored programmes for older people and

***Summary of intelligence on physical activity*** which contains a brief reference to older people

Available at [www.doh.gov.uk/publications](http://www.doh.gov.uk/publications)

### **Better Health in Old Age**

From Professor Ian Philp, National Director for Older People's Health, highlighting progress over the past three years in the National Service Framework for Older People and setting out the vision for the future. It includes a strong recommendation on the promotion of physical activity.

Available as a download from [www.doh.gov.uk](http://www.doh.gov.uk) and visit the NSF for Older People page.

### **Falls: The assessment and prevention of falls in older people - NICE guideline**

The National Institute for Clinical Effectiveness and the National Collaborating Centre for Nursing and Supportive Care have published a guideline for the NHS in England and Wales on the

assessment and prevention of falls in older people. Available as download from [www.nice.org.uk](http://www.nice.org.uk)

## **Health Development Agency**

*The effectiveness of public health interventions for increasing physical activity among adults: a review of reviews*

The Health Development Agency has published an update of its evidence briefing, *The effectiveness of public health interventions for increasing physical activity among adults: a review of reviews*, by Melvyn Hillsdon, Charlie Foster, Nick Cavill, Hugo Crombie and Bhash Naidoo. This document is published on the Health Development Agency website at: [www.hda.nhs.uk/evidence](http://www.hda.nhs.uk/evidence)