

PILMENY DEVELOPMENT PROJECT OLDER PEOPLE'S SERVICES PROJECT

Background: PDP developed North East Edinburgh LOOP Community Navigator Project between 2014-2019. At the end of the project funding period, PDP had identified additional gaps in services for older people in North East Edinburgh.

To address this unmet need, PDP developed its **Older People Services Project** which began in April 2019. The **vision** for Pilmeny Development Project Older People's Services Project (OPSP) is to deliver a service that will prevent deterioration in health and wellbeing and reduce the overall impact of social isolation and loneliness experienced by older people, through preventative engagement in their local community.

Margaretann Farquharson and Mary O Connell are employed (job-share) 17.5 hours each per week = 35 hours, with management support provided by Pilmeny Development Project (PDP).



In light of COVID-19, PDP completely reconfigure its services, initially to cope with emergency support needs of the most vulnerable older people who were socially isolating or shielding. PDP continues to provide an Alternative Service Provision for older people, carers and their families in line with the Scottish Government Restrictions. From March till the present due to COVID-19 we had to reconfigure our service and develop Alternative Service Provisions for our older people.

We are now offering a range of service provision for local older people including:

1. Telephone Befriending	6. Social distancing meetings
2. Practical Support/ Foodbank Deliveries	7. Digital inclusion
3. Information provision	8. Virtual Groups
4. Newsletter	9. In-Person Groups
5. Activity Packs	10. Inreach service

Older People and Carers PDP Risk Register

During the reporting period, PDP received **36 new referrals**.

Community Link Worker - 6	Social Work - 2	GP - 1
NHS - 3	Family/ Friend - 2	Police Scotland - 1
Voluntary Organisation - 6	NE Locality Team - 2	Local Business - 1
Housing Association - 6	Dementia & Memory Support – 2	Mental Health Assessment
OT/ Physio - 2	Home Care - 1	Team - 1

Status of referrals as of March22

Weekly Telephone Calls , Info provision, Digital Support		Continued Support: 12
Completed	3	Completed: 9
Referral Inappropriate - signposted to other service	6	
PDP Group had not reopened/ taking referrals	6	No service: 15
Referral – No response	10	

Stats of Service Users

- **Gender** – 49% Men, 51% Women
- **Carers** – 38 service users are carers
- 91% of service users **live alone**
- 6 Service Users have disclosed they are part of the **LGBTQ** Community
- **BME:** 26 Service Users (Eastern European, Asian, African – mainly through the Multicultural Workshops)

Age Range	
90+	5%
80-89	30%
70-74	42%
60-69	18%
50-59	5%

Volunteers

“I feel so blessed to be volunteering with PDP”.

“Thank you all for such an amazing experience volunteering at Pilmeny Development Project – it brought me such joy”.

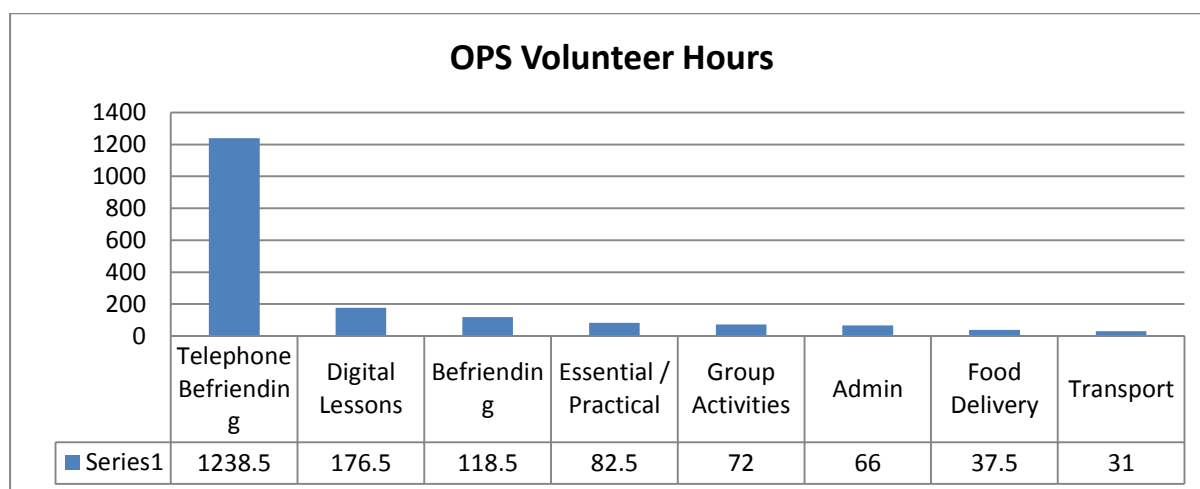


Christmas Delivery Volunteer



Newsletter/ Activity Pack Volunteer

As of Mar22, PDP had **97 Older People Service Volunteers**. During the reporting period, volunteers have given **1,822.5 volunteer hours**.



As restrictions evolved so has PDP alternative service, and hence its volunteer roles. During lockdown; volunteers were needed to help with crisis food deliveries, pharmacy collection and telephone befriending. As restriction lifted, a more blended service was provided to older people and carers; telephone befrienders could meet with their befriender, one-to-one computer lessons could be provided in person/ group and social activity groups could happen, with the need of volunteers to help with transport (Driving/ Passenger Assistant)

PDP had identified 8 new volunteer roles which responded to the needs of older people and PDP during 2021/22: 1) Emergency Food Deliveries 2) Practical support 3) Telephone befriending 4) Information support/ Newsletter 5) Befriending volunteers 6) Digital Inclusion 7) Driver and 8) Passenger Assistant.

PDP held 8 group volunteer training sessions (6 volunteer inductions, 2 Digital Connecting Training sessions and 1 in-reach training session), plus each volunteer completed training for each volunteer role.

PDP Older People Services

1. Telephone Befriending

PDP volunteers and staff made **4,466 'Social/ welfare Contact' calls to 134 local older people**, to address social isolation and loneliness.

We recognised as restrictions continued to stay in place, with little news other than about COVID, the Telephone Befriending conversations could become stale and focus on the negative news. To rectify this we developed quizzes, activities pack and afternoon teas parties for Telephone Befrienders and Befriendeds to do over the phone together.

The idea behind this was that the Telephone Befriender and Befriender have something different to talk about and have some fun.

2. Practical Support /Emergency Food Provision

Volunteers have been recruited from PDP & LTB to assist with daily practical tasks for older people who are unable to go out and have no one to help. These tasks included lifts to medical appointments, gardening, pharmacy prescription, shopping, etc.

PDP also referred older people to a local foodbank, when an emergency foodbox/ ready meal was unavailable. As many older people are unable to go to the foodbank themselves (poor mobility/ no transport/ self-isolating), PDP volunteers collected the food parcels from the foodbank and delivery to the older person home.

PDP older people received practical help from PDP volunteers/ LTB members **94 times**.

3. Information Provision

Older People were provided with **285 pieces of info about services/ opp** available during COVID-19. PDP OPS made **135 referrals** on behalf of PDP Older People. These include:

- Health e.g. Mental Health Assessment Team, Bladder & Bowel Nursing Team, Stroke Nurse, Podiatrist, Physio at Home, BeAble
- Housing e.g. Edindex, SCD re installing shower, PoLHA
- Safety e.g. Keysafes, Fire Safety Visit
- Financial e.g. Money Advice shop, Grapevine, Pension Credit, Citizen Advice
- Sensory loss e.g. Specsavers home visits, Deaf Action
- Carers e.g. Care for Carers
- Food e.g. Meals on Wheels

“Thanks for the information about Care and Repair and the integrated firm alarm system – I have just rang them and made my appointment. I won’t have known about it if it wasn’t for PDP”

4. Newsletter

PDP create, printed and distributed **8 Newsletters (1,850 copies) to over 375 older people**. The newsletters contained articles on safety and health issues, crossword, home based activity ideas, handy tips, jokes, etc. Many of our older folk in Leith don’t have smart phones and are not online so it is really hard for them to get information or feel in touch.

“A little bit of everything. And there was such cheeriness to it. Ideal for someone living on their own and feeling forgotten”

5. Activity Packs, gifts and Afternoon Teas

PDP volunteers have helped research, create and delivered **1,061 activity packs/ gifts/ afternoon teas to 243 local older people**. Examples included: Older Men's Group Football Sweep, Lifecare Summer Pack, personalised Christmas Gifts and so much more.

"My dear friends of Pilmenny group. All of you are truly truly kind folk. I was overwhelmed when I opened the door to Ian (PDP volunteer) and more so for the beautiful parcel of gifts – each one of them warming my heart. I am so lucky to be blessed with such loving kindness, lovely to read all the information so very useful, it has all been so terribly gloomy with this covid. God bless all of you my dear, dear friends and thank you for such loving care. I will you all everything that is good in 2022"



"I wanted to thank you and Pilmenny for the lovely Christmas parcel. What a heap of goodies! I particularly like the manicure set and the blank-page notebook is earmarked for sketching. Most of all thanks to Pilmenny and Ellis for the hand made card. The thought that a young person who has never met me could be prompted to make a card and so carefully write in it to someone they didn't know, was very touching. It had pride of place next to my family cards."

6. Social Distance Befriending Meetings

When restrictions allowed, PDP organised the safe meeting of Telephone Befriendees/ers to meet. During the reporting period, **102 socially distance meetings** took place. All volunteers were provided with volunteer kits (hand sanitiser, masks, wipes, lanyards, etc) and all meetings were risk assessed by the Development Workers.

7. Digital Connecting Project

PDP Digital Connecting Project seeks to address the digital divide, social isolation and loneliness of older people in Leith, exacerbated by COVID-19, by increasing their digital literacy. PDP will

- organise digital learning and support sessions (1:1 and group) in line with COVID-19 coming out of lockdown regulations,
- develop large print/visual information suitable for older people who are not familiar with new technology and
- seek to develop a sustainable community based volunteer IT learning, help and support skills sharing network.

PDP has a computer library (laptops/ tablets/ wifi) which we will give/lend to local older people, and then match them with volunteers to encourage them to engage digitally. During the reporting period, **147 digital lessons** took place for 350 participants. These included 1:1 lessons and groups lessons e.g. Staying Safe online, using zoom, etc. We have also created and printed digital information booklets, and are seeking feedback from participants.

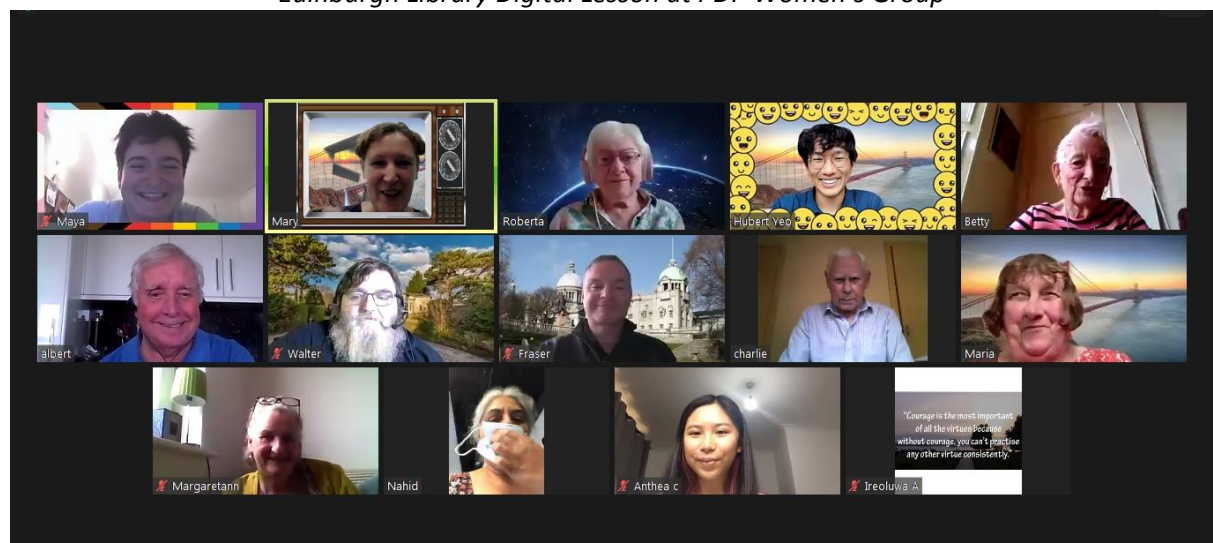
“I was so stressed at the beginning and dreaded using zoom but eventually I am helping other participants to access zoom – can’t believe it!”

“I’m so happy to be able to share photos with my family in Australia – my son and daughter-in-law can now see what I’m up to”

“Personally I found it excellent, with sensitivity to our different levels of experience with zoom”



Edinburgh Library Digital Lesson at PDP Women’s Group



Get the most out of Zoom Training

8. Virtual Groups

During the reporting period, PDP has offered **109 virtual groups, with 674 attendees**. These have included coffee groups, reminiscence sessions, healthy food talks, Edinburgh Remakery Wardrobe Repair workshops, Active enquiry plays, etc. Through the offerings the Digital Connecting Project more PDP older people were able to engage in our virtual groups.

“Being with people, even online was great as I live alone and have no family. I especially needed the groups before and after Christmas and look forward to catching up with my friends I have made at Pilmeny”

As restrictions lifted, we explored if there was a continued need for the virtual social/ activity groups. We discovered while some older people were able to access social/ community support in person, many of the older people we work with; their mental and physical health had deteriorated during the pandemic (anxious to go out into the community/ felt left behind, mobility has deteriorated, older people have moved to new areas and had not made friends, etc) and there continued to be a need for regular social online activities to reduce social isolation and loneliness.

Additionally before Christmas 2021, with Omicron’s cases increasing, PDP was able to move (with some ease) a few of in-person group activities online for older people. With many of PDP older people’s festive plans being cancelled (family members unable to travel/ visit, Christmas parties postponed to 2022, etc) many older people were disappointed and were anxious being alone over Christmas and New Year. PDP held a number of virtual social activities pre/post the festive period to alleviate participants’ loneliness and social isolation.

As restrictions ease PDP is also able to offer more opportunities for group digital learning and plan a programme for 2022 where older people can learn a range of digital skills e.g. accessing Edinburgh Library Resources, NHS Inform, ordering Lateral Flow Tests online, on demand TV, accessing Edinburgh Council services, etc.

9. In-Person Groups

As restrictions eased we were delighted to be able to offer in-person groups, such as PDP Womens Group and Men’s Group, PDP, LTB and Ageing Well Coming Out of Lockdown Pilot Project, Intergenerational Projects, In-Person Coffee groups, etc. During the reporting period, we held **48 in-person group meetings with 382 attendees**.

Additional work needed to be done to ensure participants safety and comfort in returning back to the groups, which was time consuming but essential. These included risk assessments, pre/post sanitising/ ventilating, phone calls to reassure/ support participants, offering/ organising transport (due to tram work in Leith/ fear of using public transport/ deterioration in mobility, etc), matching older people with volunteers to chum them to activities, etc.



Gentle Seated Exercise



Trip to Living Memory Association

“Won’t know these people, now know 14 new people”
“I lived alone previously and never seen anyone from week to week”
‘Camaraderie, togetherness & friendship, group bonding’

10. In-reach service

PDP’s At Home ‘In-reach Service’ supported socially isolated or housebound older people, who are unable to get out of their own home. The ‘in-reach service’ is a personalised, person centred service which seeks to meet the needs, wants and capabilities of each individual older person who is unable to get out of their home.

We were unable to offer the in-reach home visit service during the pandemic and were delighted as restrictions eased for PDP OPS Community Workers to visit. During the reporting period, we did **19 in-reach home assessment visits**.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and Evaluation information has been gathered to evidence project outcomes. It must be noted that some of the usual methods employed, such as focus groups, were not feasible due to COVID-19 restrictions, while some outcomes were more about sustaining, rather than improving due to the impact of COVID-19. Monitoring and Evaluation methods we used included:

- No of Older People/ Referrals
- No of telephone calls, food deliveries/ practical support/ activity packs/ newsletters/ social distance meeting/ virtual groups/ digital lessons
- Feedback from other agencies, staff, other professionals, families, carers and wider community networks
- Case studies, quotes and stories
- Questionnaires

PDP surveyed **PDP Digital learners/ volunteers/ virtual meeting participants (45 respondents)** using a Google Poll. PDP volunteers supported older people to complete the survey, thus learning a new digital skill. From the Google Poll:

- 100% strongly agreed/ agreed “I feel supported by PDP staff/ volunteer”
- 98% strongly agreed/ agreed “I have gained new skill”
- 98% strongly agreed/ agreed “I have learned new information about other groups/ services”
- 93% strongly agreed/ agreed “I have gained in confidence/self esteem”
- 93% strongly agreed/ agreed “I feel of value and /or am valued”
- 98% strongly agreed/ agreed “I feel I have gained new contacts/ friends”
- 93% strongly agreed/ agreed “I feel less isolated since using the project”.
- 93% strongly agreed/ agreed “My mental/emotional health is better”
- 98% strongly agreed/ agreed “I am more able to participate in community activities (eg. Virtual social activities, adult learning, etc)”.
- 98% strongly agreed/ agreed “I feel more involved in my community since using the project”.
- 98% strongly agreed/ agreed “I feel more connected to my community”

PDP surveyed **PDP/LTB/Ageing Well Coming Out of Lockdown Participants and volunteers (8 respondents)**

- 7/8 questionnaire respondents strongly agreed/ agreed with the statement - My mental/emotional health is better since using the project.
- 7/8 questionnaire respondents strongly agreed/ agreed with the statement - I am more aware of the importance of physical activity since using the project.
- 7/8 questionnaire respondents strongly agreed/ agreed with the statement - I am more physically active than I was before taking part in the project (e.g. gardening, walking, housework, exercising,)
- 8/8 questionnaire respondents strongly agreed/ agreed with the statement - I feel less isolated since using the project.
- 8/8 questionnaire respondents strongly agreed/ agreed with the statement - I feel more connected to my community (seeing more people, getting out and about more).
- 8/8 questionnaire respondents strongly agreed/ agreed with the statement - I feel there are fewer barriers to enable me to participate in community activities since taking part in the project
- 8/8 questionnaire respondents strongly agreed/ agreed with the statement - I am more able to participate in community activities (eg. social activities, community events, groups).

Conclusion

The last year has had many challenges, but PDP Older People’s Services were able to build on their existing infrastructure and strong relationships, to adapt quickly and develop alternative services which addressed the needs and wants of the local older people.

COVID-19 only further highlighted the need of PDP OP Service to support those who are socially isolated, lonely, live alone and/or on low incomes.

A special thanks much got to PDP Older People Volunteers who shown commitment, care and support every week to PDP, local older people and the wider community. **THANK YOU!**

