

DESCRIPTION OF THE PRACTICE

1. Title of the practice

Older People Remaining at Home (OPRAH) Pilot Project

2. Organisation responsible for the practice

Dublin City Council, Ireland

3. Contact person(s)

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4. Summary of the practice

The Ageing Well Network (AWN) implemented an action research project aimed at identifying and testing innovative approaches in four demonstration sites to support significantly more older adults living in their own homes and communities. In particular, OPRAH is concerned with those experiencing frailty or disability and who live alone or who have a carer experiencing stress or burden as a result of their caring role.

The aim of the initiative is:

- to provide an adequately supported home environment where the frail older person can remain living in their own home for longer;
- maintain or increase quality of life;
- maintain and enhance the client's social support networks;
- maintain an optimal level of independence by providing the following:
 - a comprehensive assessment of the person's social, health and housing needs;
 - an individualised care plan developed in collaboration with them to meet their particular needs, preferences and priorities;
 - a designated support coordinator who should be a suitably qualified professional with the appropriate skill level to carry out an initial assessment and call in additional professionals as required, to conduct multi-issue assessments;
 - a more intensive level of support and a wider range of support than is currently available, provided by formal and informal caregivers, such as extra home care/home help, more respite and other social supports complemented by the use of technology, when and where appropriate.

The initiative is being tested with 20 to 40 older adults in four demonstration sites in four Age Friendly City and County areas in Ireland, where the focus will be to examine how a more integrated care approach can provide an adequately supported home environment.

What worked well:

Based on informal feedback to date, it seems that having a single point of contact for all services as well as for assessments, has been a positive feature. The coordinator was able to build relationships with and between different services in the community. She was also able to do home visits and build relationships with service users who were reluctant to seek out a service.

What didn't work well:

It took a significant length of time to identify suitable participants for the service. This may be because services are more reluctant to refer service users to a pilot project that has yet to be fully established.

5. National/regional/local context of the practice

There are no additional public finances available to support the work. A number of organisations agreed to host and support the coordinators. The Royal Hospital Housing Association undertook to employ a coordinator to implement the project in one of the pilot sites (Ranelagh, a part of Dublin City).

The New Agenda on Ageing (2012), which was based on the work of six expert working groups from the Ageing Well Networks, identified the need for new approaches to reduce the number of older adults entering nursing homes, to decrease the amount of multiple admissions to hospitals and to provide more effective support to enable people to continue living in their own homes and communities.

A key feature of OPRAH is easily accessible information. Research clearly shows that the ability to live independently in one's own home is important for health, wellbeing and a sense of autonomy. Being able to independently perform normal activities in the home increases self-confidence and satisfaction with life. All the evidence shows that older adults have a very strong preference to stay living in their own homes but various factors can act as barriers.

6. Staff involved

Four areas with differing demographic profiles were selected for the pilot project and organisations identified to sponsor each one:

- Donnybrook/Ranelagh (Dublin City) sponsored by Royal Hospital Donnybrook Housing Association.
- Tallaght (Dublin South) sponsored by Tallaght Hospital.
- Skerries (Fingal) sponsored by the Health Service Executive.
- Limerick sponsored by Social Inclusion, Health Service Executive.

Two of the projects (Donnybrook/Ranelagh & Tallaght) have completed their pilot and the remaining two will finish in approximately two months.

A National Project Manager covered the four designated areas to help and support the changes outlined, and to test the feasibility of the approach with the following key features:

- There was a designated support coordinator in each site and they used the newly-developed national integrated assessment process (single assessment tool) to complete an initial care needs assessment, covering physical and

mental health, and the broader aspects of social care, including social connectedness, the home environment, ability to be out and about etc.;

- The support coordinator worked to develop individualised support measures tailored to meet the needs and preferences of older people and agree them with the person, their family and other informal support;
- The project explored innovations to extend the range and level of support available to older people. It also undertook a broad analysis of what forms of support make a difference, including creative use of home adaptations such as the facilitation of family conferencing to ensure coordinated support; or the provision of peer advocacy for older people in the community;
- The project looked at the use of evidence-based technological support tools such as sensors and telecare. It also set out to examine opportunities for establishing one-stop shops for information, including on the range of technological products and services available to support independent living;
- There was a significant focus on exploring what changes can be made in the wider community to make it easier for this target group to be 'out and about'. This is linked closely to work that has been undertaken by the Age-Friendly County initiatives. Such changes include improved community and personalised transport services, dementia-friendly community initiatives, designated community Gardaí (police) with responsibility for older people, improvements in public spaces, benches, parks etc.;
- There is a strong focus on cross-sector collaboration (public, private and voluntary) to optimise the effectiveness and efficiency of the scheme in areas such as discharge planning from hospitals, provision of home-adaptation grants, home-care supports and case reviews;
- Members of the steering group are drawn from NGOs (ALONE, Royal Hospital Donnybrook Voluntary Housing Association) and statutory institutions (Health Service Executive, St Vincent's Hospital, Dublin City Council Social Work Service & Social Inclusion).

7. Target group

The main focus of the OPRAH initiative is on older people, those experiencing frailty or disability and who, as a group, are either experiencing dementia or are at risk of doing so in the near future, as well as those living alone or who have a carer experiencing stress as a result of their caring role.

8. Aims of the practice

- Enable older people to continue living in their own homes, where they might otherwise have been at risk of multiple hospital attendances and hospitalisations, or premature entry to residential care, through more individually tailored and holistic support services;
- Reduce the number of nursing home and hospital admissions and speed up discharge;
- Identify and test the feasibility of creating effective and innovative needs-based and person-centred home-care systems in which support services are tailored to meet the individual needs of older people to continue living in their own home.

9. Issues for social services

Service Integration/ Cooperation across services	x	Service Planning	x	Contracting	
Technology		Skills development (of the workforce)		Quality of services	x
Prevention and rehabilitation	x	Participation of service users		Volunteering	

ANALYSIS OF THE PRACTICE

10. Status

Pilot project (ongoing)		Project (ongoing)	x	Implemented practice (restricted areas)	
Pilot project (terminated)		Project (terminated)		Widely spread practice/rolled out	

11. Scope of the practice

Describe the setting of the practice, considering the following criteria:

- *Micro level practice:* practice that involves individuals at local level
- *Meso level practice:* practice that involves organisations or communities
- *Macro level practice:* practice that involves large population groups

Meso

12. Leadership and management of the practice

Description of the leadership of the practice, considering the following criteria:

- *Collaborative management:* shared between large partnerships, often of central, regional and local representation
- *Organisational management:* by one organisation
- *Professional management:* managed by a single person
- *Shared management:* shared with no defined leadership

The leadership role was taken on by Royal Hospital Donnybrook Housing Association who hosted the project in Donnybrook/Ranelagh. On-going coordination is provided by the inter-agency steering committee and the work of the project is carried out by the coordinator. The other three groups in the OPRAH project would have had similar structures.

13. Engaging stakeholders in the practice

Description of the engagement of stakeholders, considering the following criteria:

- *Individual practice:* individuals have sought practice change
- *Network approach:* one or more organisations develop a network
- *Collaborative approach:* large collaboration with relevant stakeholders

Relevant stakeholders were identified and approached on three levels:

- A general information and discussion meeting
- A steering group

- A group was established consisting of representatives from community, statutory and voluntary agencies and individuals whose service users might be referred to the OPRAH project

14. Involvement of service users and their families

Description of the involvement of service users, considering the following criteria:

- *Team involvement:* service users and carers were part of the practice team
- *Consultative:* a consultative body of users was set up for an on-going dialogue and feedback
- *Involvement in care:* person-centred approaches to care/support

The coordinator approached local primary care teams, local hospitals, geriatricians and relevant statutory and voluntary services to provide them with information about the project and encourage them to send appropriate referrals to the project.

There were also local service provider information sessions about the project.

15. Costs and resources needed for implementation

Description of how the practice is financed, considering the following criteria:

- *Within existing resources:* staff time and other resources are provided 'in-house'
- *Staffing costs:* costs for staff investment
- *Joint/Pooled budgets:* two or more agencies pool budgets to fund services
- *Funded project:* external investment

Salary for coordinator; office space provided by coordinating agency; office administration costs.

16. Evaluation approaches

Description of the evaluation method of the practice, considering the following criteria:

- *Multi-method:* use of both a qualitative and a quantitative approach
- *Single method:* qualitative or quantitative approach
- *Audit:* looks at data sources such as existing medical records, and/or other routinely collected service data.
- *Informal:* refers to in-house service evaluation using locally designed tools and/or collecting opportunistic feedback
- *No evaluation*
- *An evaluation is planned*

INTERAI Single Assessment Tool, CASP and the Zarit Care Giver Burden Scale were used to assess the impact of the project. Each was completed by interview at the start of each referral and has been/will be done at the end.

Trinity College Health Policy Management Centre will evaluate the OPRAH Pilot Project when all four projects are completed. Their report should be available in summer 2016.

Data was collected through the above mentioned assessment tools and through feedback from coordinators.

Analysis will be available when Trinity College Health Policy Management complete their evaluation of the OPRAH Pilot Project.

17. Measurable effects of the practice and what it has achieved for...

Service users	n. a.
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Formal care givers	n. a.
Informal carers	n. a.
Organisations	n. a.
Other	n. a.

18. Anticipated or 'aspirational' effects of the practice and what it has achieved for...

This category can include outcomes which are not documented, quantified or properly evaluated. They can include such elements as improved knowledge, quality, workforce, etc.

Service users	Benefitted from a simplified method to access a range of services from their own homes through the support coordinator.
Formal care givers	Support coordinator successfully built working relationships with different community services and with service users. In this position the support coordinator operated as an effective link between service users and services.
Informal carers	n. a.
Organisations	n. a.
Other	n. a.

19. How the practice has changed the way the service is provided (lessons learned)

- Social support for frail older people to continue living in their own home for as long as possible
- Support for carers
- Reduce pressure on hospital /nursing home beds
- More efficient use of financial resources
- Better coordination between services

20. Sustainability of the practice

Description of whether the practice is sustainable, considering the following criteria:

- *Potential for sustainability:* practice was newly started or is on-going/not yet mainstreamed. How could the practice be sustained (in terms of resources)?
- *Organic sustainability:* service users have been empowered to take the practice forward
- *Established:* the project has been operational for several years

Not mainstreamed yet. Research findings and other pilots will have to be completed and evaluated first before opportunities for mainstreaming can be discussed.

21. Transferability of the practice

Description of whether the practice has been transferred, considering the following criteria:

- *Transferred:* transfer to other regions, countries, service user groups, etc.
- *Potential for transferability:* there is interest from the outside; elements of the practice have been taken up and used elsewhere; material for transferability (for ex. training material) has been developed

The initiative has been implemented as pilot projects elsewhere and has the potential to be implemented in other places.

Elements that could be used elsewhere:

One stop shop for contact with the services a person requires. The service user does not have to have knowledge of all the services available in an area as the coordinator can advise them on their options.

22. Further information

<http://agefriendlyireland.ie/>

[Ireland: New Agenda on Ageing \(2012\)](#)