

Project Description: Older Persons' Worker

Aim of project:

To reduce social isolation among seniors by:

- Engaging with health professionals and other services to gauge the extent of the problem across Redcliffs and Sumner population
- Developing long-term strategies to increase participation in the community by seniors, some of whom may have mobility or mental health issues which prevent them easily engaging in their community.
- Developing capacity within existing community volunteer networks and Bridge2Rocks TimeBank members, to run a programme on an ongoing basis to reduce social isolation.

Term of Project

One year paid 30 hours per week position for a social worker or someone with relevant experience.

Outcome of Project

By the end of one year, a programme will have been commenced utilising existing community resources such as volunteers and TimeBank members to work with seniors to reduce their social isolation. This programme will essentially run itself with some oversight by the community development worker so the ongoing responsibility will sit with Sumner Bays Union Trust

Future Budget needs

These are likely to be limited, and may include reimbursements of the costs associated with volunteering – including fuel, for example. This would not apply to TimeBank members undertaking work on the project as they already receive time credits.

Background

Both the 2006 and 2013 censuses showed that Redcliffs, in particular, had 19-20% of its population aged over 65 years. Local health professionals have reported that there is a problem with social isolation in this age group.

The earthquakes have added an element of uncertainty and stress on an age group that is already nearing the end of their lives with the issues that would normally go along with that, including poor health. Some have had family members leave the region, and others have had a great deal of upheaval due to property issues. It has had a cumulative effect.

In addition, when a person starts to lose their mobility, their confidence can go down markedly. They may refuse to go out because they do not want to be a burden on other people. Consequently they may start to feel very lonely which has long term implications for their mental health.

Role and Responsibilities

- To engage with health professionals and other services to develop an indicative profile and a database of socially isolated individuals (privacy issues to be covered);
- To develop strategies to engage socially isolated individuals with existing Sumner Bays Union Trust activities;
- To develop additional programmes to reduce social isolation;
- To develop strategies to engage socially isolated individuals with activities run by other organisations in the community;
- To utilise existing volunteer networks and the Bridge2Rocks TimeBank to reduce social isolation;
- To establish a pool of volunteers to support socially isolated individuals.

Functional Relationships

- Reports to Sumner Bays Union Trust board chair and/or delegated representatives
- Functional relationship with SBUT staff
- Functional relationship with local health professionals and other relevant services
- Functional relationship with local elderly people

Timeline over a proposed 12 month start up period

Stage One

Develop a profile and database of socially isolated individuals and begin to develop a relationship with these people. This will be done by liaising with local health professionals, clergy, and other relevant services (including Age Concern).

Stage Two

Develop strategies to engage these individuals with existing SBUT activities or otherwise those run by other organisations. This will include developing a relationship with volunteers and Bridge2Rocks TimeBank members who can assist, such as with transporting people to activities.

Stage Three

Put in place a programme which will enable other SBUT staff (Community Development Worker, Bridge2Rocks TimeBank coordinators) to ensure the longevity of this project utilising volunteers and Bridge2Rocks TimeBank members.