



**BRISTOL
AGEING
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LOTTERY FUNDED

The Harbour Group Work Peer Support Pilot

June 2016 - May 2017

The Harbour - Group Work Peer Support Pilot

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Bristol Ageing Better (BAB) is a partnership of organisations working to reduce social isolation and loneliness among older people and help them to live fulfilling lives. In Autumn 2015, BAB began to commission sixteen pilot projects as part of the Group Work Peer Support Service. These pilots tested different methods of group work and peer support in tackling loneliness and isolation.

Group work and peer support use peers to help people focus on their assets, abilities and potential routes to recovery and general wellbeing. It mobilises the insights and empathy of people who share similar problems or experiences to support their peers, in this case regarding loneliness and social isolation.

This report provides an overview of the pilot project delivered by The Harbour. In line with BAB's 'test and learn' approach, this report will highlight key points of learning and advice which may be useful for other projects within Bristol Ageing Better or the other thirteen Ageing Better areas funded by the Big Lottery Fund through the Fulfilling Lives: Ageing Better Programme.

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Project overview

The Harbour aimed to provide counselling to 6 older couples affected by dementia, based on the 'Living Together with Dementia' (LTwD) model developed by the Tavistock Centre for Couples Relationships.

The 'Living Together with Dementia' approach targets the person with dementia and their partner, focusing on the relationship between them. It aims to improve their life experiences by supporting the independence of both partners, improving the quality of their relationship and reducing the carer burden.

The Harbour delivered a 'Living Together with Dementia' training course to 11 therapists, psychologists and other healthcare professionals. Once these professionals were trained in this specific approach, The Harbour aimed to undertake 2-3 initial counselling sessions with each couple. These initial sessions would focus on emotional support and helping to understand the impact of their dementia diagnosis. If it was suitable for the couple, they would then receive approximately 10 sessions of counselling based on the 'Living Together with Dementia' model.



Project delivery

A greater number of professionals than anticipated were trained in the 'Living Together with Dementia' approach. The Harbour expected to train 3-6 professionals but eventually trained 11.

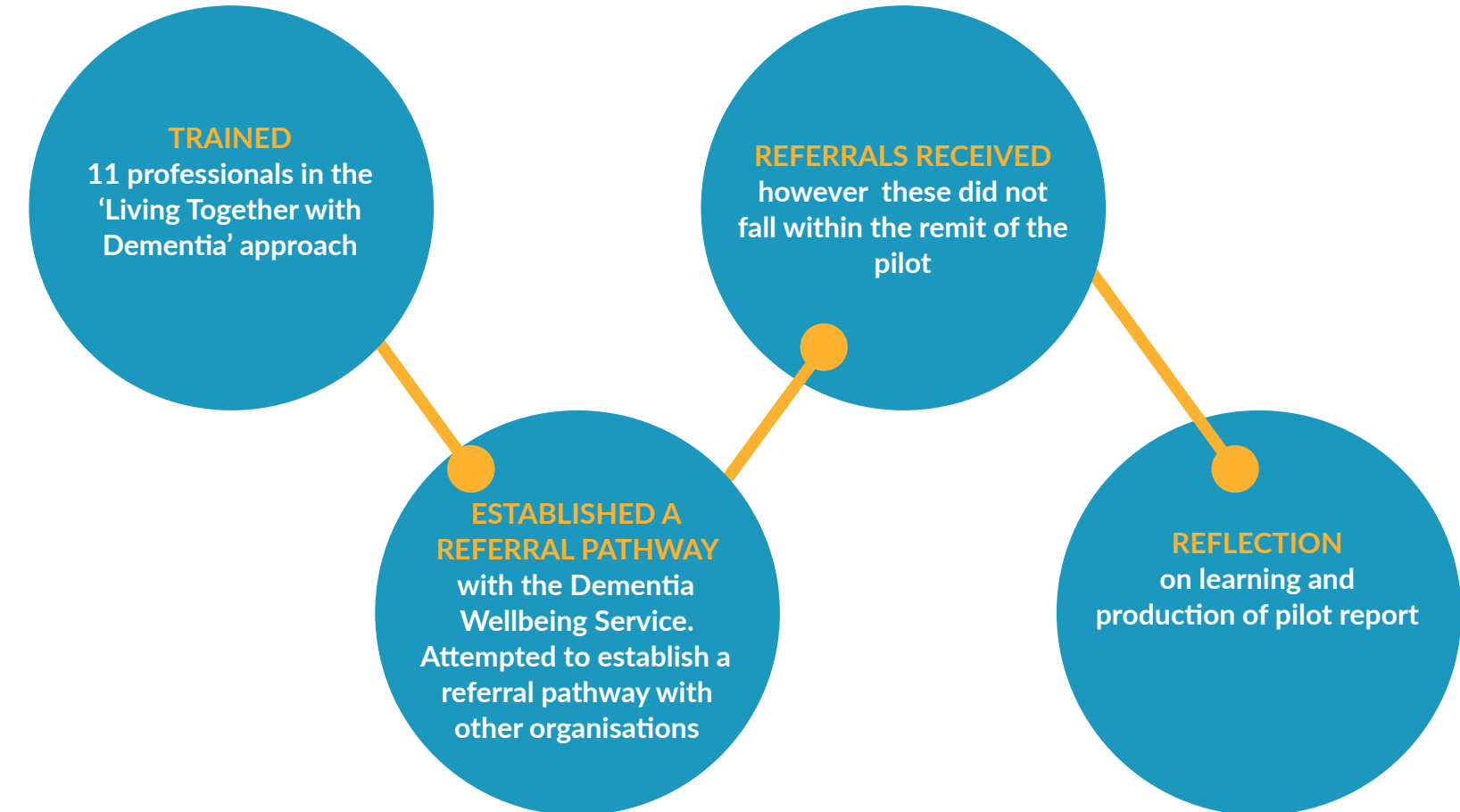
Referral pathways were established with The Harbour's Dementia Wellbeing Service, in order to receive referrals for this pilot project. While many referrals were received from the Dementia Wellbeing Service, these did not fall within the remit of this pilot and therefore The Harbour provided these individuals with alternative forms of counselling instead, funded through other means.

Unfortunately, no referrals were received from other organisations and therefore no participants took part in this pilot project.

Learning

A key piece of learning was the need to put more investment into embedding this project into other services which already exist, in order to receive an adequate number of referrals. This could involve creating promotional materials, developing guidance for referrers and extensively circulating this (for example within the BAB network) in order to raise awareness and encourage these referrals.

Project process





TheHarbour

Someone to talk to
when you need it most

Bristol Ageing Better (BAB) is a partnership working to reduce social isolation and loneliness among older people and help them live fulfilling lives.

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