

Who should read this?

This guide draws out some of the lessons from the final evaluation of Time to Connect (TTC). It is intended for time bank co-ordinators and members who want to engage with people who live in care settings such as residential and nursing homes, or supported living.

What is Time to Connect?

*“The whole project is down to the human part, who we are.
The heart, the trust, the give and take.”*

Time to Connect aims to help people living in care settings to play a greater part in the life of their community. It is a partnership initiative, supported by the Big Lottery Fund, between the National Development Team for Inclusion (NDTi) and Timebanking UK (TBUK).

The project is supporting care staff and their managers to think and act differently about inclusion in their organisations by using a range of tried and tested tools and approaches. At the same time, time banks are working alongside participating care settings to help connect their residents to the community and to encourage people’s contribution. This animation explains how timebanking works: www.youtube.com/watch?v=rYzIAHImAnk



Why is it important to do this?

Inclusion lies at the heart of timebanking. It means that people with disabilities and older people have the same opportunities and choices as everyone else, to contribute, to learn, to have friendships, hobbies and the chance to spend their time doing the things that bring meaning, enjoyment and fun to life. Timebanking has an asset-based philosophy where we believe that everyone in society is of value. It works by encouraging people to help one another by offering them time credits for every hour of help. Everyone's hour is equal and with the time credits, people can ask for help in their homes and gardens from another person in the time bank. We know that when people move into a care setting such as a residential home, connections to the community can be broken, and people can be left feeling that they are no longer able to make a contribution. This in turn can lead to feelings of isolation and a poor quality of life. TTC aims to break this cycle by helping people find or rediscover their passions and reconnect with the community. The story, below, shows how this can work.

Jazz up your Life is a monthly a community dance event organised by time bank staff and supported by time bank volunteers. It's for anyone in the community. People of all different backgrounds and ages come but people who live in residential care are particularly supported to attend. When they come they dance, they sing, they reconnect with old friends, they make new ones, they spend time with their spouses, they share stories of their lives, they enjoy listening to stories of people's lives, they enjoy a cream tea, they feel valued, they feel happy. One member of staff sums up the experience for their residents:

"I see people that are very quiet, very introverted come to something like this with music and dancing and people are happy. They respond to that lift in mood, so I then see those people maybe from grumpy, unhappy, withdrawn, they come out to something like this and it's like a light switch has been flicked and they're prepared to go and meet new people which they wouldn't otherwise do."

What difference can Time to Connect make to older people and people with disabilities?

"People are now more confident in asking for what they want, for example, (they've asked for) a multi-cultural evening with food."

"One of the residents wanted to go to (a gallery visit) on her mobility scooter. A time bank member also uses a scooter and knows the route, so they went together on the back roads on their scooters."

Jazz Up Your Life shows the difference timebanking's contribution to TTC can make to people living in care settings. We found that peoples' lives were improved through TTC in the following ways:

- **A stronger purpose in life**
- **Better connections**
- **Reduced isolation**
- **Greater confidence and assertiveness**
- **Improved health and fitness**

What difference can it make to time banks?

"We can learn from each other's company. Our interactions have impacted the lives of the time bank members as well as the lives of the residents."

"The social fun at (a care home) is getting quite popular with the time bank members: four new members joined us this month."

"I've made friends with these people ... It's a pleasure to come here."

Time banks are providing invaluable opportunities for people living in care settings to play a greater part in the life of their community. This has multiple benefits for them, their families, the care home staff, time bank members and wider community. The timebanking element of TTC has provided so many benefits, including:

- Time bank co-ordinators and members are having a real opportunity to influence the care settings they are working with and the staff who work there, and to improve the lives of their residents.
- Time bank co-ordinators are becoming more skilled at working with different groups of people – this not only benefits the people involved, but also has the potential to lead to further funding if the benefits of timebanking, in and with care homes, is explored.
- Existing time bank members are benefiting from the supportive friendships they have developed with people living in care settings.
- Care staff and residents have joined the time banks to give support as well as receive it, empowering them and giving them renewed confidence and a 'zest for life.'
- Increased numbers of people are joining groups led by time banks: 285 care home residents have been engaged and 66 volunteers and time bank members have been involved.
- Timebanking UK are sharing the learning with all time banks across the country to encourage more connections with care homes.

What difference can it make to time banks? (continued)

TTC has involved a great deal of activity and connections for the time banks that took part, summarised below:

Timebanking statistics for Time To Connect	No. Hours
Number of Care Homes engaged	20
Number of Care Home residents engaged	285
Number of Volunteers and Time Bank Members involved	66
Time spent on planning and preparation of project/exchanges	2090
Time spent on 121 social time exchanges with Care Home residents *	31
Time spent on group social time exchanges with Care Home residents **	4057
TOTAL Time spent on Project	6147

*Calculated as time in Hours x No. time bank members undertaking exchange

** Calculated as time in hours x No. of care home residents participating in activity

What can I do?

If you are a co-ordinator or a member in a time bank and would like to do more to help people in care settings connect with their communities here are some things you can do ...

- **Build trust:** Time bank co-ordinators have benefited from investing time and energy to build relationships and trust with local care home staff and managers. This has been an important part of the work to ensure that the care homes understand what time banks do and what's involved. Be clear about the timebanking element and how it differs from volunteering. Explain how the time swaps can work and why it is so empowering for residents. Reassure staff that you are there to add value to their role – not replace it!
- **Go where the energy is:** Identify the best person to speak to in the care home, it may be the manager, the activity co-ordinator or another member of staff. Do they have the interest, enthusiasm and ability? It's important not to add to a potentially already stretched workload for staff. Highlight how the time bank can work alongside staff who are supporting residents. Be creative, build their confidence, show them what's possible.
- **Find out:** What the care staff like doing – are there interests that can be shared and explored?

What can I do? (continued)

- **Pilot new activities:** Where activities are new, work with time bank members, community members, care staff and residents and activities deliverers to develop the opportunity and pilot it. This is a great opportunity to test the idea, see what works or doesn't work and shape it accordingly. Don't be afraid to introduce activities, visits and people to come to the care home to start with for those who are worried about going out into the community.
- **Ask and Listen:** Find out what older people or people with learning disabilities are interested in and how they can be part of the time bank, especially people who have more complex needs, there are lots of different ways that people can be involved.
- **Promote your opportunity visually:** Bring the opportunities you are promoting in time banks to life with pictures or videos so that people can easily see and understand what the activity or event is all about.
- **Think about logistics:** Think about the practicalities of how people will get to the activity, what support they might need from staff and how much it will cost. Transport costs and availability, availability of care staff to support residents, affordability of activities and specialist equipment in toilets for example, will all be potential barriers for people in residential care to participate. Where possible think about how to overcome these common barriers, for example encourage support workers, time bank members and others to accompany care home residents.
- **Be prepared:** It's important to recognise that for care staff there is lots of planning and preparation required before a resident is ready to go to activity. This might be something time bank co-ordinators and members will need to bear in mind when encouraging residents to take part but also something that they can help with. Over 2090 hours were given by time bank members to support the planning and preparation of visits out of the care home.
- **Be Aware:** Some time bank members are living with a physical or mental health condition themselves. Consider what support they might need if someone they have built a friendship with becomes seriously ill or dies.
- **Be Inclusive and creative:** Work with the abilities of the whole group. Make sure the activity is something that everyone could get involved in, or include a range of different activities, so that everyone has a chance to shine.
- **Be resourceful:** Often budgets are small or non-existent so think how to do things people enjoy without spending money, for example by bringing in resources from time bank members or other community networks.

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