



# Reablement for independent living

## **Leeds Adult Services, the Skills for Independent Living Service**

Adapting its home care service to meet demographic challenges has resulted in a successful reablement service: Skills for Independent Living Service.





## Background

In 2010 Leeds Adult Services looked at the best way to develop its in house home care service into a broader based community support service. The focus was on how best to put people first. To give individual customers more choice and control and support more people to safely live in their own homes by maximising their independence. A priority was to develop a reablement service that could respond more directly to customer needs. To help people regain ability and confidence to do things they used to, such as cooking, bathing without help, or getting out to the shops. It was also clear that the home care service needed to adapt and change to meet the demographic challenge of older people needing care in the future.

## Aims

The aims of project were to:

- support people from the community and those recently discharged from hospital to live independently in their own home
- set up pilot teams to train people in independent living skills
- offer support for up to six weeks.

## What was done?

The community care service restructure started in 2010, including the establishment of the council's home care reablement service known as Skills for Independent Living Service (SKILS).

The reablement service was developed by creating a number of pilot SKILS teams in each of the three areas of Leeds. The first took place in the west and north west area of the city, taking in new customers from the community. A second route into reablement was soon added, taking in customers recently discharged from hospital. The small pilot teams had weekly meetings to review progress and fine tune implementation—this proved crucial to the development of the service.

Reablement was offered for up to six weeks and many customers did not need any more support than this. Each customer received an outcome-based support plan, agreed with them, about what they wanted to achieve. Plans were reviewed with the customer and the staff member on a weekly basis, so that customers were fully aware of their progress in achieving individual goals and how the SKILs staff could further support them over subsequent days and weeks.

“Reablement required a change in focus and a cultural shift not just for customers but for staff as well. This meant moving away from doing tasks for people to supporting people to do things for themselves.” **Amanda Wardman, SKILs Delivery Manager.**



## Outcomes

In addition, to reabling significant numbers of people, the SkILs teams helped Leeds Adult Services to review the processes for an improved customer service.

Initially, referrals went via a local authority occupational therapist (OT), who was also the case manager. It was found that some people only needed appropriate equipment for reablement and they were filtered out as they did not need the care service. More recently, social workers have taken on the role of case manager, with OTs becoming involved in more complex cases.

SkILs teams contribute to assessments and provide the homecare reablement element of care packages. They also have access to the basic equipment that may be necessary and have moving and handling and equipment training. Staff members are encouraged to use their initiative and be flexible to offer a customer focused service.

Reablement does not work for everyone and some customers do require a referral on to other services such as home care. In these instances, the SkILs team were integral to providing the right level of care to customers based on their changing care needs. This helps ensure that the right level of care is requested to support the person's long term needs. For continuity of services, an effective handover period is arranged with the new provider.

## Impact

The reablement pilots have performed well:

- 70% of customers who completed a reablement package did not require any further intervention and were reabled to live independently at home
- 63% of reabled customers continued to live independently a year after their reablement had come to an end
- the remaining 30% of customers in receipt of an ongoing service after reablement all showed a reduction in the number of care hours they needed.

What is more, reablement customers also reported that after their reablement programmes they felt:

- more in control and safer in their daily lives
- cleaner and more presentable
- that they got all the food and drink they wanted, when they wanted it
- that they had more social contact in their communities
- more able to spend time doing things they valued and enjoyed.



## Reablement success story

One of the earliest referrals was a young woman who had been diagnosed with a brain tumour 14 years before. She was referred by the NHS to SkILs as she had a number of falls, which led her to be admitted to hospital. After three weeks' intervention from SkILs she was able to:

- shower by herself
- cook for herself
- manage her personal care.

She has not required another package of care in the six months since the intervention. She commented on the SkILs staff, "they gave me my confidence back, they helped me."

## Learning

Key learning points are:

- setting up pilot teams was effective in paving the way for full roll out
- effective communication with staff and customers is the key to success
- it is important to evaluate performance to gain feedback on successes and issues which need to be addressed
- enthusiastic leadership is vital, as the new service has required a cultural shift in attitudes and approaches
- reablement can make a big impact on customers' lives
- social workers need support to embrace the reablement philosophy.

## Next steps

Following the successful pilots, reablement has been rolled out and is available city wide. Seven SkILs teams are operational and there is a plan to quickly expand to nine teams.

Once the service is at full scale it will handle about 2,000 referrals per year, with around 150 SkILs staff available to provide homecare reablement across the city.

The council is also working more closely with Leeds Community Health Trust to ensure that Intermediate Care Teams and the reablement service works closely together.

Looking to the future, the key is to deliver the right care at the right time every time because, as Amanda Wardman, the manager of the SkILs service notes, through reablement "we are making a real difference to people's lives".

## Contacts

[www.leeds.gov.uk](http://www.leeds.gov.uk)

## Links

[http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/workforce\\_strategy/workforce\\_innovation\\_programme/partnership/NToW42.aspx](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/workforce_strategy/workforce_innovation_programme/partnership/NToW42.aspx)



### **Further information**

For further information about the health and social care integration work between Skills for Health and Skills for Care please contact:

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