RECOMMENDATIONS ON CONDUCTING

A POPULATION INVENTORY


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THE JOINT WORKING GROUP

The Joint Working Group is composed of representatives from both statutory and voluntary agencies involved in caring for the Elderly. The group was born out of a desire for constructive dialogue between the statutory and voluntary sectors. The history of voluntary/statutory relations in Ireland is not very impressive and yet the need for a stable and creative relationship between the two sectors is very great. The Joint Working Group is, therefore, a group of tremendous importance trying to bridge an age old gap.

This however, cannot be done in a vacuum. For this reason the Joint Working Group has confined its terms of reference to the situation of the elderly in three Dublin parishes. At present, the agencies represented are, Catholic Social Services Conference, Dublin Corporation, Eastern Health Board, Friends of the Elderly, St. Vincent de Paul Society and Voluntary Services International.

WHY A JOINT WORKING GROUP?

The problem of Dublins elderly population are many, ranging from poor housing conditions and insufficient income to the less visible poverties of isolation and fear. Everyone has a role to play in combatting these problems. However, many of us presume that the shocking
Why a Joint Working Group? (Cont'd..)

kind of cases of neglect, hardship, even death we see reported in the media don't occur in our immediate vicinity. There are many such cases near all of us which mostly go unnoticed.

Some of the facts concerning the elderly living alone in the thirty two counties revealed in the St. Vincent de Paul Society's Book "Old and Alone in Ireland" are startling and even frightening.

HOUSING:
30% have none of the basic water amenities (flush toilet, sink, wash-hand basin, bath, shower, or hot water supply).
10% have no electricity supply.
20% suffer from dampness.
25% suffer from draughts.
34% say they have a pressing personal housing need.

SOCIAL CONTACT;
25% Feel they would not be missed if out of sight for a day.
36% do not meet people on a daily basis.
44% have no means of calling help in an emergency.
50% are not visited by neighbours or friends.

The only way to ensure that the needs of the elderly in a given area are catered for, is to begin by accurately and systematically establishing both who are the elderly in the area and what precisely are their most pressing needs.
THE JOINT WORKING GROUP PROJECT.

The Joint Working Group Project, started in May 1983, and set out with the objective that the needs of the elderly in three parishes of Dublin City be systematically and exhaustively surveyed. This demands that:

a) All the elderly in the parish are identified and

b) They are check-listed as to their needs / Circumstances using the Joint Working Group checklist adapted from the St. Vincent de Paul society checklist.

Other ancillary components of the project are:

1) That a profile of all relevant services for the elderly in these parishes, whether voluntary or statutory be drawn up.

2) That in function of and in response to the facts established by the checklist operation, meetings to be organised with all the relevant agencies in each parish to establish priorities for action and ways and means of improving the living situations of those elderly in each parish found to be most in need.

3) That an evaluation of voluntary/statutory co-operation be carried out during the course of the project:

   a) On the relationship between the needs of the elderly as established by the checklist and the services available in each parish.

   b) On the level of response to the findings of the checklist.

....
WHY DO AN INVENTORY?

Social services, both voluntary and statutory operate within very definite restrictions, mostly financial. There is however, one very great problem with any service which is not universally applicable and that is the question of eligibility, in particular locating those who may be eligible:

Unfortunately, there is no available listing of any particular subset of the general population. One of the main criticisms of state and indeed voluntary services is that they operate on a 'hit-and-miss' basis. They will provide the service only when people come and look for it. Many cases slip through the complex network of organisations, relations and communications. However, many feel that it is not the role, particularly in the statutory sector, of social agencies to actively seek persons eligible for various services. In fact, many would say that the complex and fickle regulations and thresholds of eligibility are specifically designed to discourage people from seeking the benefit or service.

To improve the uptake and distribution of services then would demand the development of some kind of process which would identify individuals requiring various services to the providers of these services. It would seem that there is little referral between different agencies providing similar services which are aimed at the same sector of the community, particularly between the voluntary bodies. This "independence" is in itself a factor in limiting the extent or impact of services required.

...
Why do an inventory? (Cont'd..)

There is on the surface a considerable amount of overlap in both services provided and the recipients. One of the first steps in any attempt to overcome this limitation, must consist in part, of an attempt to systematically and exhaustively identify the target population, be it the elderly, single parents, unemployed etc. The unfortunate problem with this activity is that it can never, in fact, be 100% accurate for any given moment. People die, move away, their status, circumstances may change from one day to the next, so the product of any identification process is limited as to what it can achieve in terms of accuracy. Ideally, information could be received and co-ordinated from various government departments who have 'right of access' to personal information. Unfortunately, for our purposes that information is protected by codes of confidentiality. The cost involved in providing a service of 'population location' at any level, national or local, would be prohibitive as would the growing concern over surveillance and information protection.

Where does this leave us then in relation to the arbitrary application of services? One of the initial aims of the Joint Working Group - on the Meeds of the Elderly when it started the identification and checklist project was that the project, in outline, should be easily transferable to any other area that may wish to initiate a similar project.

The purpose of this document is to set out in
Why do an Inventory? (Cont'd...)

rudimentary form the options available to someone wishing to carry out this type of 'inventory' project and the methods and strategies that can be employed.

This document is specifically aimed at the Dublin area and the location of the elderly. The recommendations made here are based on the experience of the Joint Working Group in the three parishes where they are involved.

The initiative for such a project, however, must come from a fairly small unit such as a parish, ward, small town etc. and it must come from those who have a genuine motivation to improve the distribution and allocation of services, whether that interest stems from direct involvement in voluntary or statutory agencies or from a desire to see more exhaustive coverage by the existing services.

• RECOMMENDATIONS:

What follows is a series of recommendations and guidelines for carrying out the identification of one or several sub-populations. The concern of the Joint Working Group, however, is specifically, the elderly in Dublin, but methods and strategies could easily be adapted to any sub-population.
Recommendations (Cont'd...);

There are several immediate questions that have
to be answered before tackling the job of identification.
The first problem is one of definition.

THE TARGET POPULATION:

What are the parameters of the population. If the
target population is the elderly in the community, are
the limitations based on age, circumstances or other?
Are you seeking to locate all those over 60, 65 or 66
years of age, those living alone over a given age, or
those in receipt of a pension, perhaps pensions of a
particular type. Depending on the sub-population to be
identified, various choices such as these will have to be
made. Other possible groups of interest, besides the
elderly, would be the unemployed, early retired, single
parents, widows/widowers, mentally/physically handicapped
etc. Ideally, if the resources were available, these could
be done concurrently and this possibility should certainly
be kept in mind when deciding to undertake the identification
project.

THE AREA:

Now, the area for identification needs to be clearly
defined. Is the project going to cover an area served
by a community centre, a parish, certain electoral wards,
a township or some other unit? Is the area limited by
a river, main road, park, etc.? Once a decision has
been made on the boundary of the area, the follow/ing steps
should be followed.
The Area (Cont'd..);

1. Draw a map of the area showing clearly the boundaries.
2. Make a listing of all the streets, roads, avenues, laneways, cul-de-sacs, etc.
3. Arrange them in alphabetical order.
4. Do a population estimate for the area.

This can be done by using various information sources.

Get a map showing the electoral wards, which is available from the Central Stationary Office, Molesworth St., Dublin 2. - cost approx. £1.50.

Mark off the area to be covered on this map.

List the wards or proportion of wards covered by the area e.g. Halston St. Parish covers all of Arran Quay C, 90% of Inns Quay C, and 75% of Arran Quay B.

Request the population breakdown for those wards from the Central Statistics Office, Ardee Road, Dublin 6 - cost about 20p per ward. You can request the breakdown for each ward by age, sex or marital status, occupation etc.

For example, a request for a breakdown for each ward for those over 60, by sex and marital status. The information returned will look like this:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arran Quay A</th>
<th>Age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>60 - 64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widowed</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A corresponding table will be supplied for the female population of the area.
The Area (Cont'd. J:

If the required information is not available in detailed form such as given above, other readily available statistics can be used. For example, to take the case of the elderly, we know that 10.57% of the population of Dublin are over 65%, so we could do a rough estimate from that. We should, then, have a fair idea as to what kind of numbers we can expect to locate.

STRUCTURE;

It is advisable to organise the project on a reasonably formal basis. Elect or suggest members of a steering committee and assign areas of responsibility e.g. Recruitment of volunteers, co-ordinating work, training and information, liaison officer etc. The project must appear to be well structured and organised if it is to have credibility. Limits should be set at the outset as to the time scale involved. A limit of six months is suggested as a reasonable period in which the project could take place-
RESOURCES:

This question sets the theme for the kind of project that can be undertaken. What money is available? What information sources can we use? Are the people we are looking for known to any reliable agency? Where are we going to get the help/volunteers needed to work on the project.

VOLUNTEERS:

Several methods can be used simultaneously to recruit volunteers. All local resources should be explored, such as local associations, clubs etc. If that avenue does not produce sufficient numbers of volunteers, small leaflets could be distributed around the area, advertisements in local shops, notices in community newsletters, if necessary, letters to the editorial page of newspapers or notices in the small ads. columns. Volunteers from these sources should be carefully screened for committment to the project/work with the elderly.

It is also very important to remember, when using either national or local press, that the elderly are a vulnerable sector of the community. It is, perhaps, best then, not to publicise too widely the nature of the project or the fact that it will involve calling to peoples houses, to avoid attracting the wrong type of volunteer and to protect the project from impersonators. Do not overburden the volunteers on the first assignment, it may prove to daunting a task. There is considerable
Volunteers: (Cont'd..)
variability between the work of volunteers and there is
no distinct preference that should be aimed for in terms
of age etc. Volunteers should be given a short training
course depending on the methods being used. Either
way, some discussion should be given to the elderly as a
group in society.

METHODS:
There are three basic methods or strategies which
can be employed in making an inventory.

Postal Type Method:
What is known as a postal type questionnaire can
be used. This means that the questionnaire is delivered
to the house and is left with the occupant for completion
and return. The procedure involved is as follows:
1) Decide on the minimum information required.
   Keep the format simple.
2) Design a simple questionnaire which will yield all
   the information necessary. See Page 1.5.
   Seek advice before constructing a questionnaire. An
   example is supplied here.
3) Make the introduction as convincing as possible.
4) Arrange for a deposit box(s) in central locations
   where the completed forms can be returned.
5) In order to improve the rate of response, enclose
   an additional covering letter explaining the
   importance of the project and emphasise the local and
METHODS: (Cont'd..);

community aspects.

6) Organise volunteers to distribute the questionnaire on a house by house, street by street basis.

This method has both advantages and disadvantages. While there is a cost in printing the form, this can be minimised by using a stencil. The postal type questionnaire does not require the same manpower as other methods. Account should be taken of the level of literacy among the population before opting for this method. The accuracy of information collected and the percentage of forms returned could place serious limitations on the usefulness of strategy.

Simple Inventory;

This second method is to carry out the identification in a systematic fashion of inquiry. A volunteer should call to each house and enquire as to the ages of the occupants. For this purpose, volunteers should be supplied with identity cards and "flash cards". (See example). The flash card is used as a means of asking the question e.g. "Could you tell me what age categories on this card, the people in this house fall into". This method, although reasonably reliable and exhaustive, demands considerable manpower and can be very slow having to call back to some houses.
FLASH CARD:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>JOINT WORKING GROUP on the needs of the ELDERLY.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Would you please indicate the number in each age group in your household.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61 - 65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66 - 70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You would need to have one volunteer for every 100 - 120 houses. It is preferable to have them working in pairs as it reduces the unwillingness to knock on doors.

Electoral Update:

The third strategy that can be employed is to use the information resources available in the area.

a) Buy a copy of the electoral register, sold on a ward basis from the Register Offices, Fishamble Street, Dublin 2.

b) Compare the electoral register to the actual area and insert missing addresses. See page 16'.

c) Distribute copies of the register to anyone who has contact with the elderly, such as the Public Health Nurses, G.P.'s, Old Folk's Clubs, Order of Malta, Red Cross, Residents Association, Ladies Clubs, ' Vincent d Paul, Priests and Religious etc.
Electoral Update;(Cont’d..);

Ask them to:
1) Indicate the persons they know to be definitely over 60 years.
2) Indicate persons they know to be under 60 years.
3) Add in persons they know to be over 60 but who do not appear on the register.

This process can eliminate up to 40% of addresses in the area. Using volunteers knowledge of their local area and more informal information sources, this can be brought up to 65% - 70%.

d) Made a listing of all houses where there is no information available, or where information is incomplete. Again, make sure identity cards are issued to anyone calling door-to-door.

e) Use a "flashcard" for door-to-door identification.

Example shown in previous section. It helps reduce the awkwardness of inquiry.

This method demands less manpower but can be quite slow as it can take a long time to establish contact and co-operation with different agencies. Even when this co-operation has been gained, it can take a long time to receive the marked registers back.

Before deciding on which strategy to employ the resources available should be carefully studied to see which method is most suited to the area and the number of people helping with it. The possibility of identifying several populations at once should also be borne in mind to get maximum benefit from time and labour invested.
Dear Resident,

The local community council is concerned with improving the activity of voluntary/statutory organisation in our area. We are compiling a register of persons over 60 years of age.

Would you please complete this form for everyone living at this address:

ADDRESS: ____________________________________________

Please tick appropriate age:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resident</th>
<th>Under 60</th>
<th>60 - 65</th>
<th>66+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please return the completed form by March 31st, 1984 to the Community Council by using the box's at the following locations:

Church, Main Street,
Malone Shop, John Street,
Community Centre, Kevin's Green.
REGISTER OF ELECTORS

IN FORCE FROM 15TH APRIL 1983 TO 7TH APRIL 1984

COUNTY BOROUGH OF DUBLIN

CONSTITUENCY (1980) = DUBLIN CENTRAL
E.E.C. CONSTITUENCY = DUBLIN
BOROUGH ELECTORAL AREA = DUBLIN CITY NO. 5
WARD = ARAN QUAY C
POLLING DISTRICT = AC

THE FOLLOWING LETTERS AGAINST A PERSON’S NAME MEAN THAT THE PERSON MAY:
L = VOTE AT LOCAL ELECTIONS ONLY;
E = VOTE AT LOCAL AND EUROPEAN ELECTIONS;
P = VOTE BY POST ONLY.

BEFORE USING THIS REGISTER, CHECK IF THERE IS A SUPPLEMENT CONTAINING CORRECTIONS.

1ST APRIL 1983

DUBLIN CORPORATION,
CITY HALL, DUBLIN 2.

PAGE 1.

REG. UNIT - ARAN QUAY C

POSTAL DISTRICT D.7

ARAN QUAY

ARIDUR HILL D.7

54 NOLAN, DAVID 50
55 ROCHE, KATHLEEN 60
56 FLYNN, JOHN 61
57 COVAP, ROBERT JOHN 62
58 COVAP, BERNADONTE 62
59 COVAP, ROBERT (JUN) 62
60 MADREN, DORES 63

ARRAN QUAY TERRACE D.7

61 BREEN, HARRY 61
62 BREEN, HENRY 61
63 MURPHY, CECIL 61
64 MURPHY, JOHN 61
65 MURPHY, ANTHONY 61
66 MURPHY, SEAMUS 61
67 KILLEEN, ROBERT 61
68 CLARKE, KATHLEEN 61
69 CLARKE, MARY 61
70 CONROY, MICHAEL 61
71 DONOHUE, THOMAS 61
72 DONOHUE, ELIZABETH 61
73 DONOHUE, ELIZABETH (JUN) 61
74 DONOHUE, ROBERT 61
75 DONOHUE, PHILIP 61
76 SORAHAN, EILEEN 61
77 FAHY, JOSEPH 61
78 LAKIN, KEVIN 61
79 KEARNEY, MARTHA 61
80 KEARNEY, MARTHA JUN 61
81 MCDONNELL, MARY 61

BENDURB STREET D.7

82 DOUGLAS, PATRICK 1
83 McGANN, MICHAEL 1
84 MCDONEL, JOHN 1
85 O'BRIEN, MARIE 2
86 O'BRIEN, MARY 2
87 O'BRIEN, CHARLES 2
88 O'BRIEN, DAMYOT 2
89 O'BRIEN, KEVIN 2
90 P. O'BRIEN, SEAN 2
91 O'BRIEN, ANN 2
92 CAFFERY, THOMAS 2
93 CAFFERY, BRIDIE 2
94 CAFFERY, MARY 2
95 O'BRIEN, WILLIAM 21
96 O'BRIEN, PAULINE 21
97 ELLIS, JOSEPH 23
98 ELLIS, MARY 23
99 KENNEDY, PATRICK 23
100 THOMPSON, PATRICK 23
101 THOMPSON, PATRICK JUN 23
102 SULLIVAN, CORNELIUS 23A
103, SULLIVAN, ELLEN 23A