

Summary of support and advice to Friends of the Elderly

Friends of the Elderly supports older people through a variety of services: care homes, day clubs, home support and a variety of other services in England and Wales. Their services focus especially on those who are in need due to physical or mental frailty, isolation or poverty.

Friends of the Elderly's Home Support Services offers help with day-to-day tasks and problems such as paying bills, shopping and medical appointments, with support workers acting as trusted friends. The charity wants to know if it is possible to demonstrate that the service enables clients to stay in their own homes for longer, and if it may reduce hospital admissions and other reliance on public services.

We matched the charity with economist Dr. Julian Laite (Julian Laite Consulting) who has worked closely with Friends of the Elderly over several months to determine the best approach to understand the effectiveness and value of the Home Support Services.

Dr. Laite has developed a series of recommendations relating to the data required to help the charity meet their aim. The first stage involved clarifying what is possible with Dr. Laite designing questions in collaboration with Friends of the Elderly managers and Home Support Workers. The next stage considered data: determined what was available in usable form, what would be available for analysis and what could be collected for the future.

A third stage involved the design and piloting of a Home Support Workers' questionnaire. This was informed through discussions and consultations with experts in the field and commissioners. A second questionnaire will be used to gather feedback from clients, which will be collected by charity staff.

Once gathered, the data will be analysed by Dr. Laite, working closely with staff at Friends of the Elderly.