

TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL HEALTH & WELLBEING BOARD**6th December 2018****Social Isolation Conference Evaluation and Feedback****REPORT OF: Louise Mills Service Delivery Manager Prevention & Health Improvement (TWC) & Rachael Jones Service Delivery Manager Community Participation (TWC)****LEAD CABINET MEMBER – Cllr Arnold England****PART A) – SUMMARY REPORT****1. SUMMARY OF MAIN PROPOSALS**

There is growing recognition that loneliness is a serious problem. It has implications for individuals and communities and can affect a person's mental and physical health. Loneliness and social isolation has strong links with all three Health and Wellbeing Board priorities. Recent reports suggest the issue carries costs that are comparable with the health impacts of smoking and obesity. The terms loneliness and social isolation are often used interchangeably, but it is possible for people to be isolated but not lonely and vice-versa. We know that loneliness can increase the pressure on a wide range of council and health services – it can often be a tipping point for referral to adult social care and can be the cause of a significant number of attendances at GP surgeries. Many GP consultations may have loneliness at the root of the problem.

Effective action to combat loneliness is best delivered in partnership. Effective interventions are often low cost, particularly when voluntary effort is harnessed. On the 12th October 160 people representing 75 different organisations came together to talk about loneliness and social isolation in Telford & Wrekin – this local event was held as a first step towards tackling this issue providing an opportunity for the council to engage with other partners and to identify opportunities to work collaboratively to address loneliness as a multi-faceted issue.

This report summarises the conference programme, the key messages and next steps

2. RECOMMENDATIONS (AND TO WHOM ACTIONS APPLY eg CCG, Council)

The Board notes the report and endorses progress and next steps

3. IMPACT OF ACTION - (How it is intended that action will make a difference)

- An increase in the number of people taking local action and working collaboratively to reduce loneliness and isolation in Telford & Wrekin
- An increase in the number of volunteers supporting local projects so that more people can access support and connect with their local community

4. SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

COMMUNITY IMPACT	Do these proposals contribute to a specific HWB Priority	
	Yes	Strengthen our communities and community based support Priority Encouraging Healthier Lifestyles priority Improving mental health and wellbeing
	Do these proposals contribute to specific Co-Operative Council priority objective(s)?	
	Yes	To improve the health and wellbeing of our communities and address health inequalities
	Will the proposals impact on specific groups of people?	
	Yes/No	Yes
TARGET COMPLETION/DELIVERY DATE	Ongoing programme of work	
FINANCIAL/VALUE FOR MONEY IMPACT		Not applicable
LEGAL ISSUES		Not applicable
EQUALITY & DIVERSITY	Yes/No	Yes – there is potential for a positive impact upon individuals with protected characteristics
IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS	Yes/No	The programme of work impacts across the population of the Borough and includes targeted activity within those wards reporting higher levels of loneliness and social isolation
PATIENTS & PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT	Yes/No	Yes Involvement of advocacy groups Strong community engagement for some projects
OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES	Yes/No	None

PART B) – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

1. INFORMATION

The local event set out to:

- Raise awareness of the issue, the evidence and the action we can collectively take to reduce social isolation and loneliness
- Involve members of the public, communities and organisations
- Dispel the myths and raise awareness that anyone can be affected by this issue
- Raise awareness and showcase local projects and services that are available
- Create a networking opportunity for local people who are interested in this issue
- Create a learning opportunity through workshops and discussion
- Build a network of Social Isolation & Loneliness Champions
- Raise awareness of available funding to support social isolation and loneliness projects

Eight different stories were filmed to illustrate loneliness and social isolation – the stories are powerful and share the very different approaches that people are taking to combat loneliness and isolation in their own lives including the support they are receiving from local people, communities and support services. Many of the people sharing their personal stories attended on the day and their real life experience proved invaluable to the group discussions.

<https://healthytelford.wordpress.com/2018/11/19/8-different-stories-about-loneliness-in-telford-wrekin/>

1.1 Workshops and group discussions

1.1.1 Volunteering

All delegates attended a workshop to consider how volunteers can tackle loneliness. Delegates considered volunteer opportunities that they were aware of; identified what resources would be required to deliver more volunteering schemes locally and discussed and considered opportunities for partnership working across the borough. Key messages included:

- Taking action to maximise links with Parish & Town Councils
- The valued contribution of local churches and faith groups and the need to identify opportunities for working together across organisational boundaries and communities including Age UK, the Carers Service, Alzheimer's Society and Signal
- Taking action to encourage local businesses to support volunteering schemes as part of their commitment to social value
- Taking every opportunity to share resources and to maximise local skills and expertise; for example sharing venues, equipment, volunteers and paid staff and supporting each other for bid writing to support the development of local projects

1.1.2 Loneliness affects young people too

Delegates explored how loneliness affects children & young people; mapped local activity and through group discussion identified solutions to address gaps in support. Key messages included:

- Access to information and training so local organisations are better able to support children and families with additional needs who may be at an increased risk of loneliness and social isolation
- The importance of working together through existing networks to identify particular groups of young people at risk of social isolation and then talking to and involving young people in developing local support
- To prioritise investing in and supporting volunteers to ensure this is done well
- To work collaboratively to create opportunities for intergenerational projects and opportunities for young people to come together with older people through games, gardening, woodwork, art, cooking and music
- To work collaboratively to develop volunteering and befriending schemes with a focus on connecting partners who can work across generations
- Develop information so young people can connect to what is needed or available
- The importance of building confidence through developing life skills.

1.1.3 Tackling loneliness in older adults.

Delegates explored the key components of an age friendly neighbourhood capturing the contributions that organisations and individuals are making – delegates identified key actions required to create age friendly neighbourhoods. Key messages included:

- Locally we have a wide range of existing activity and assets that contribute towards the creation of age friendly neighbourhoods.
- A large number of organisations and people are involved in making a contribution to creating age friendly neighbourhoods including: paid staff with a remit to work specifically with older adults; staff whose role brings them into contact with large numbers of older people e.g. health staff, social workers, uniformed services; volunteers; neighbours; organisations, housing providers, voluntary organisations, statutory organisations, Town and Parish Councils, and businesses
- Delegates would like to focus on working collaboratively to address the following gaps: improving professional's knowledge about communities; developing effective communication mechanisms for deaf and hard of hearing communities; sharing information and enhancing our community hubs; promotion of services using effective channels to reach our target audience other than social media

1.1.4 Can culture combat loneliness?

Delegates explored the role of culture, sport, libraries and the arts in tackling loneliness. Key messages included:

- Acknowledgement that we have a fantastic cultural offer in Telford & Wrekin enhanced this year by Telford50
- Good understanding of the valued contribution that culture can play in tackling this issue – local action should focus on reducing barriers so more people can connect with culture

- Delegates generated a long list of 'bright ideas' and quick wins and would like collaborative working to focus on: celebrating all ages (not just older people); working across generations; developing volunteering and befriending schemes to support people to access cultural opportunities and to build confidence; exploring use of unused buildings to develop and host 'pop up' cultural activities close to where people live (contributing to a sense of place and safer neighbourhoods)

1.1.5 No one should have no one.

Delegates considered our shared purpose in tackling this issue and shared their own ideas to shape a local campaign to end loneliness in Telford and Wrekin. Key messages included:

- A commitment to work collaboratively to: give people a choice & a chance not to be alone; to raise awareness that isolation is ageless – different generations coming together to reduce isolation; raise awareness of what loneliness means in Telford; know your neighbour; for everyone to have someone; and that tackling loneliness and social isolation is 'all our responsibility'
- Delegates developed campaign messages, mapped assets, generated campaign ideas and discussed communication channels for five campaigns that they would like to focus on: volunteering campaign; awareness raising campaign; intergenerational campaign; Know your neighbour community campaign; and a workplace campaign with a focus on support for employees and encouraging local businesses to support community action to tackle loneliness

1.2 Loneliness Champions

To close delegates were invited to join our local call to action. 80 people signed up to become a 'Loneliness Champion' and committed to:

- Making the case for, and promoting the benefits of social connectedness at every opportunity
- Providing case studies and blogs to showcase their local work
- Share learning, resources and tools
- Making a pledge to reduce loneliness and to share progress in making it a reality

Pledge examples

I will launch Telford 2 Contact the Elderly Groups within the next 6 months. I will work with local organisations to find volunteers for additional groups and work with local referrers who can identify isolated people.

I will organise and run a conference/workshop to raise awareness & understanding of families with disabled children.

I will explore the issues and barriers that lonely people face to better understand how we can support them to take part in volunteering – to help connect them and build their confidence to do more.

I will create a toddler group that is different – where people share life and nurture each other.

I will set up a buddy/befriender service in Lightmoor, use the Feeds the Birds idea in our communities.

I will talk to the older people in my street more often, particularly the ones who live alone.

I will host tea parties for older people (Contact the Elderly). In the future we will have an Elder Abuse recovery Service which will support older people who have been abused, improving their health & wellbeing and reintegrating them into the community and engage with local activities

I will write a lottery grant bid for a community voluntary organisation to include some new physical activity/recreation.

I will work on developing relationships with the senior citizens of Admaston, through providing a monthly lunch & cinema club.

I will call on and visit 50 people over the next 3 months I currently have no contact with.

I will create an assessment (informal) to make sure that event activity considers how someone on their own would feel about it if they were on their own & seek to overcome it. Also, start a chatty table at Forge.

I will have a chat & natter table (Sutton Hill) and explore how the food we offer can encourage people to come together.

Intergenerational work with a couple of school gardens

I will ensure that loneliness is discussed at Home Visits (British Red Cross) with all clients, even if it is not identified on the initial referral.

2.0 Next Steps

- Project team to produce and publish a full conference report
- Project team to publish Loneliness Champion Pledges providing opportunities for Champions to share practice, challenges and solutions and to recognise and celebrate achievements through the council website, Healthy Telford Blog & Twitter, publications and at our events
- Review the outputs from each workshop to identify a small number of priorities and coordinate task and finish groups to progress local discussions
- Work at neighbourhood level, to support communities to come together and to build on existing community capacity and assets to tackle this issue
- To work collaboratively to recruit and develop more volunteers to support local projects
- Support for local groups to apply for funding to build community capacity to tackle loneliness and social isolation
- To ensure the new Live Well Directory includes information about local support for loneliness and social isolation to support signposting and information sharing

Thank you and acknowledgements

The project team would like to acknowledge and thank the following organisations for their support in making the event a huge success

- Energize Shropshire Telford & Wrekin
- The Hub Singers Community Choir (Sutton Hill)
- Public Health England West Midlands
- Telford MIND
- BEAM and the Childrens Society
- Chatty Café
- Hub on the Hill
- TWC Community Participation Team & Health Improvement
- Forge Urban Revival
- ROC Café
- Senior Citizens Forum
- Carers Centre
- Homestart
- YSS

3.0 IMPACT ASSESSMENT – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

None

4.0 PREVIOUS MINUTES

- None

5.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- None

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