

**HEALTH AND ADULT SOCIAL CARE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL
INFORMAL MEETING: LONELINESS SPOTLIGHT REVIEW**

DATE/TIME: Tuesday 27th January, 2015, 10.00 a.m.

VENUE: Civic Chamber, Floor 2 Civic Office

Attendance: Councillor Tony Revill (Chair), Councillor Patricia Schofield (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Linda Curran, Alan Jones, Tracey Leyland-Jepson and Lorna Foster.

Other: Councillor Christine Mills, Cabinet Member for Housing, Environment and Waste

Officers: Dave Hamilton, Director of Adults and Communities
Dr Rupert Suckling, Assistant Director of Public Health
Lisa Swainston, North Area Manager (theme lead on community wellbeing), DMBC Health, Adults and Well-being
Glyn Smith, Team Leader, North Area Team, DMBC Health, Adults and Well-being
Ben Hathaway, Stronger Communities Officer, North Area Team, DMBC Health, Adults and Well-being
Jane Rodgers, Wellbeing Officer, South West Area Team, DMBC Health, Adults and Well-being
Caroline Martin, Senior Governance Officer

Invitees: Jackie Pederson, Chief of Strategy and Deliver – NHS CCG
Vickie Ferres, Chief Executive of Age UK
Sue Womack, Health Manager – Doncaster CVS
Trevor Smith – New Horizons
Community representatives & the over 50s parliament:
Tim Knowles, Tony Bryan, Kath Wake, Glenis Wall and Kim Doyle

1. Apologies

Councillors Elsie Butler and Sue Phillips

2. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Tony Revill declared that he was a Director of SYCIL but it was noted that the company no longer was in operation

Councillor Alan Jones declared that he received a pension from a company that provides home alarms for the elderly.

3. Chair's Introduction

The Chair reported that the today's meeting had been called to gather an understanding about loneliness in the Borough, how it was being addressed and be given examples of good practice. Details of the key lines of enquiry were identified within Appendix A of the papers previously circulated.

4. Local Perspective

Councillor Alan Jones asked a general question in relation as to how loneliness can be addressed and how Doncaster Council can influence the process.

- Kath Wake stated that it had taken time within the community of Hexthorpe but it seems to have turned a corner and now there was real community spirit. Funding had been sought from various avenues and this had enabled different activities to be programmed. It was envisaged that if the Council were to have a directory of possible events that could be tapped into by various groups this would enable more people to become involved which would help in reducing loneliness. This would also be beneficial for house bound residents including the partially sighted.
- Glenis Wall thought that this would be a useful document but not everybody wants to be part of a group so would need to be looked at on an individual basis and not on mass. Glenis stated that through an adults services grant, the Women's Institute group that she was a member of had doubled their membership through publicity.
- Councillor Alan Jones asked whether it would be of benefit if the Local Authority were to set up tester days, so people could try different activities. It was felt that this would be a good idea.
- Tony Bryan asked whether a mapping exercise could be carried out particularly because of the new boundary changes to avoid any conflict in neighbouring areas and publicising the events was an important part of the process i.e. involving GP's, District nurses to promote by word of mouth and poster advertising.
- Glenis Wall stated that some Doctor's surgeries do not put posters up even though you have asked them to. Tony stated that it's a question of not letting people say 'no' and outlining that they are part of the community and should be committed.
- Kim Doyle reported that she runs a club of 50 members which opens 2 days a week. It was commented that the worst day for people is a Sunday so she has started opening on a Sunday for a film club and youth club. She also stated that with regard to funding there seemed to be more funding available for older

people rather than younger which had meant she has had to knock down to once a week for the youth club. It was advised that if we could try to get the younger generation to mix with the older this could be beneficial, an example was provided where a younger person visits an older person twice a week to provide that company and support. She reported that she had attended an intergenerational course which she had found useful but unfortunately no follow up session had been provided.

- Councillor Alan Jones reported that the Parish Newsletter could also be used for publishing events and for those communities which do not have a parish meeting, notice boards or bus stops could be used to display posters. He also stated that communities should be making use of their neighbourhood teams.
- It was reported that some groups had made use of their Neighbourhood Teams as well as the Church, but some groups which had only recently formed were on a learning curve. It was suggested that perhaps working together and sharing of information and ideas would be beneficial to all groups.
- Discussion took place with regard to funding and how easy funding could be sought. It seemed that some groups had found it quite easy to tap into funding through various avenues such as Lottery Funding, Match Funding with the help of their Neighbourhood Teams. There had been some difficulty in gaining insurance and funding for transport and rent which the Council may be able to address. It was also advised that if anybody wanted to attend, there was a training session on Lottery Funding being held at CAST.

The Chair thanked representatives for attending and stated that if they wished to stay for the remainder of the meeting they were more than welcome to do so. The Chair announced a 5 minute break.

5. Local and National Picture – Laurie Mott (Head of Public Health Intelligence).

A presentation outlining the national picture in relation to loneliness was given to Members presenting data/statistics on the various groups of individuals that could be at risk of loneliness/social isolation. It was reported that loneliness and social isolation were very different although still related. It was also noted that loneliness is not just found in older people. Following the presentation, Members were afforded the opportunity to ask questions which were as follows:-

- In relation to Carers, it was asked whether there was any indication of how many secondary school children were classed as carers – It was reported that although there wasn't a known register in operation, there was some detail that could be provided to Members. It was suggested that GP surgeries may be able to help with providing that information.

- It was highlighted to members that there are a lot of carers within the borough who don't like to be referred to as carers, for instance family members caring for older relatives.

Laurie Mott was thanked for his attendance and presentation.

6. What is being done in Doncaster? (see Appendix B written information)

Jackie Pederson, Chief of Strategy and Delivery of NHS CCG reported to Members of the work of the CCG. She stated that the CCG was a partner on the Health and Well-being Board and is involved with work on the Better Care Fund. Jackie highlighted to Members the number of initiatives that were taking place in order to provide a better care offer for the residents of Doncaster. She stated that a much more holistic approach was being undertaken rather than task driven and moving towards a case load model so one person would be responsible for that patient who is enabled to understand their needs and the type of care that is required in order to signpost that patient to the community services they need. It is envisaged that this new way of working will have a desired impact on tackling loneliness.

Members were afforded the opportunity to make comments. The following comments were made:-

- Although there were a number of young carers within the borough, it was not clear who they are and also a lot of work is carried out with the Corporate Kids and there was a need to help them as much as we can
- Members welcomed the new holistic approach and sought clarity with regard to the monitoring process and whether best practice had been taken into consideration. It was stated that this model had been promoted through the Royal College of Nursing but it was hoped that other authorities would want to use Doncaster as a best practice for their authority.
- It was asked whether we could find any way of establishing a good neighbourhood scheme to try and re-establish the community spirit that seems to have been lost in some communities.

Jackie was thanked for her presentation and attendance.

Vickie Ferres, Age UK Doncaster stated the campaign to end loneliness has identified what is believed to be the key factors in combatting loneliness. They are:-

- Staying active – including a healthy diet
- Maintaining mental wellbeing – contact with others, volunteering

Age UK Doncaster has a portfolio of services which individually and collectively work to reduce loneliness and social isolation amongst older people. In recent months one of their major priorities has been to develop a single point of access to their services with an Assessment Officer who

is able to 'triage' individuals and using an outcome focus assessment tool and co-production principles is able to develop individual support plans. Vickie reported that the campaign places great emphasis on services which have proven success in combatting loneliness. The response is therefore structured around the following:-

- Information and signposting services
- Health and Social Support needs – Assessment Services
- Support for Individuals
- Group Interventions
- Wider Community Engagement – Volunteering

Vickie outlined to Members the work that Age UK was carrying out in relation to the above areas. She also advised Members that the one area that there was an unmet need and an area of concern was the growing number of loneliness in older men. Vickie cited examples of tackling this concern through the introduction of activities such as 'walking football' and 'Men in Sheds'.

Members made the following comments:-

- Whilst patients are in hospital they were a captive audience that could present an opportunity to assess the levels of loneliness.
- Although there were growing numbers of loneliness in older men, it was pleasing to see that inroads are being made to tackle this growing concern through activities such as Men in Sheds
- Clarity was sought and given to Members on whether Age UK commissions all services or whether they have initiatives of their own. It was noted that they have a mixture of funding but do have some services funded by themselves.

Vickie was thanked for her presentation and attendance

Lisa Swainston, North Area Manager and lead on community well-being presented to Members the work being carried out by the community teams. A copy of a report detailing the following was presented to members:-

- Partnership working
- Measures being undertaken to prevent/tackle loneliness in Doncaster
- Examples of good practice
- Who the well-being officers are; and
- Snap shot of activity and community and individual outcomes

It was reported that the joint teams were always exploring possibilities, identifying gaps in service provision and looking creatively at ways to address need in a planned joint way. Key to their work was early intervention and prevention, but importantly, about empowering people to do it for themselves. It was noted that the team have enabled the provision of 60 new start-up groups to cover identified community gaps, in the last year, which the communities now run themselves.

It was advised that as part of the Adult directorate the team are heavily involved in supporting and delivering links to food banks, winter warmth, energy efficiency and public health programmes across the borough. Members were also advised that a third sector partnership approach with communities, Adults, New Horizons and Doncaster CVS is currently building a large community map, to show all the different groups, activities and opportunities across the borough.

Details regarding the Doncaster Community Funding prospectus and other projects funded by the Better Care Fund were also outlined to Members.

Members made the following comments:-

- It was pleasing to see such dedication and commitment but it was asked whether all could be delivered. It was stated that there is a lot of work to be done but there is a very big partnership working ethic to provide the support to people to enable them to care for themselves.
- Could we identify ways in which people can be brought out of their shells and provide much valued life skills through talks in schools.

Lisa was thanked for her presentation and attendance.

Sue Womack, Doncaster CVS provided Members with an insight into the work the CVS were carrying out to tackle loneliness and social isolation. She reported that loneliness was linked to social isolation but it was not the same thing. One way of describing the distinction is that you can be lonely in a crowded room, but you will not be socially isolated.

Members were advised that from mid-August, 2014, a pilot initiative was launched called 'Doncaster Social Prescribing Project'. It was described as a partnership project between Doncaster CVS and South Yorkshire Housing Association and is funded from the Innovation Fund for a 1 year pilot project. It was advised that the project was operating in 2 pilot locations across Doncaster and they are Central Locality and North West. Sue explained that the project aims to reduce unnecessary presentations at GP surgeries, A&E visits and other hospital services whilst improving life outcomes for individuals. Members were afforded the opportunity to watch a short video which showed the benefits of the pilot scheme.

Members made the following comments:-

- It was asked why there were no more referrals for the group that had been set up at Adwick Leisure Centre and asked whether the group were still in existence and whether any work was being carried out to establish a community gardening project. It was advised that community gardening had been identified through social prescribing and ways are being identified to bring this on board. In relation to the group at Adwick Leisure Centre this would be investigated and reported back on any progress made.
- It was asked whether there were any allotment schemes in operation.

Members were advised that the team were in the process of pulling together information on allotment schemes and would report back to Members.

Sue was thanked for her presentation and attendance.

Trevor Smith from New Horizons presented to Members a brief outline of the provision and support provided to people who are socially isolated in the Borough of Doncaster. The report highlighted good example of good practice identified within the borough and case studies from neighbouring areas which Members may wish to examine.

Members were advised that Doncaster has a strong and growing voluntary sector. New Horizons has conducted health checks and quality assured 57 separate groups that provide direct support to people who are socially isolated. Trevor outlined the types of support that were offered including group activities, befriending, food banks etc. He advised Members that in addition to other organisations, Church and Faith organisations also play a major role in delivering services to people who are lonely and socially isolated. It was felt important to highlight the high level of voluntary support provided within the ex-mining communities and to state that the community spirit is still alive. Trevor advised Members of New Horizons contribution in relation to the mapping exercise being carried out which will identify all the different groups, activities and opportunities across the borough.

It was reported that although funding is still an issue to overcome, there were two issues that have been repeatedly raised as a concern and a major challenge for groups which were:-

Access to buildings – concern around budget cuts and whether they will have to close or be given increased costs to help pay for building operating costs; and

Demand outstripping supply – provision for funding of smaller groups and additional revenue costs including insurance, equipment and larger room hire fees.

Members made the following comments:-

- It was asked whether New Horizons oversees the volunteers and how they are monitored. It was advised that an annual health check is carried out and Audits do take place. If there were any concerns highlighted regarding particular volunteers then appropriate action would be taken in order to find a satisfactory solution.
- A question was raised in relation to rural wards which would prove difficult to find volunteers and how this could be overcome. It was advised that it has been proven that volunteers respond if you give them a meaningful role and ensure they are aware and see what the benefits their work was giving. It was also felt that volunteers respond well if you were willing to pay expenses and provide any training needs.

Trevor was thanked for his presentation and attendance.

Dr Rupert Suckling reported that loneliness was a key public health issue and the examples presented today as ways of tackling loneliness are real innovative, creative schemes and one of the biggest challenges set is to focus on the community well-being networks that are properly resourced.

The Chair, Councillor Tony Revill thanked all for their attendance and their contributions to the meeting and stated that Members would now take time to deliberate their findings and formulate recommendations which would be reported in due course.