

<b>DATE</b>	<b>Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> June 2019</b>
<b>TITLE OF REPORT</b>	<b>Reducing Loneliness and Isolation – Progress Report</b>
<b>Organisation and Author</b>	<b>Lie Ping Tang (Public Health) &amp; Paul Quigley (Intelligence) Dudley Council</b>
<b>Purpose</b>	1. This report provides a progress update on the work currently undertaken by Dudley Council, our partners and the communities working together to address loneliness and social isolation.
<b>Background</b>	<p>2. Due to evidence of the negative impact loneliness has on the people’s lives and demand for public services, Dudley Health and Wellbeing Board has identified it as one of its three priorities.</p> <p>3. A multi agency task and finish group has been established to oversee delivery of a system wide approach to identify people who are at risk of loneliness and strengthen partnerships to develop and implement initiatives to address loneliness and isolation, with a specific focus on older people initially.</p> <p>4. In line with the approach agreed in the Health and wellbeing strategy, action to address loneliness focuses on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What communities can do for themselves</li> <li>• What services and communities can do together</li> <li>• What services can do for communities</li> </ul> <p>5. Following several successful meetings with major chain supermarkets, a fourth workstream was established to focus on the contribution that businesses can make.</p> <p><b>Using data to identify people at risk of loneliness</b></p> <p>6. This programme is supported by a workstream to improve the information and intelligence about loneliness and isolation using modelled and observed data in the borough to help inform the approach. The Council has used a tool to identify the areas in the borough where the population are at the highest risks of loneliness and social isolation. This has been identified that five wards in the borough account for more than half of the households living in areas of above average risk of loneliness and isolation. These are: St Thomas, Brierley Hill, Netherton, Woodside and St Andrews, Castle and Priory and St James.</p> <p>7. As there are no regular, generalised sample surveys of the Dudley resident population to measure loneliness directly, more data is currently being collected using the UCLA 3-item survey tool, comprising these questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How often do you feel you lack companionship?</li> <li>• How often do you feel left out?</li> </ul>

- How often do you feel isolated from others

### **What communities can do for themselves**

8. Partners are supporting community activity to prevent and reduce loneliness, examples include:

- Cradley Library Community Garden
- Break Away, Kingswinford (a lunch and social activity club for older people at risk of loneliness and social isolation)
- Make It Happen supports community based projects that enable people to come together

#### Dudley Community Information Directory (DCID)

9. The new DCID will pull together existing information directories – the Dudley Community Information Directory, the Family Information Service and the SEND Local Offer into one new online platform which will become the ‘one stop’ place for creating opportunities for people to connect with other people, projects and places. Developing the new DCID has used co-production approaches engaging with community groups and users to develop a coproduce a service specification.

10. A provider was commissioned in May 2019 to develop the new online platform with planned completion and launch by March 2020. Alongside this development, a ‘Connecting Conversations’ campaign is being developed to support residents, volunteers and paid staff in a range of roles and organisations to use the new platform to connect people to things in their local community that can support their wellbeing, including reducing loneliness

11. Local people are encouraged to share their knowledge, skills, projects, ideas and activities using the online platform. Communities are being supported to map community assets (things of value identified by local people) including venues/ spaces, community resources, groups, activities and individuals. These will be added to the new DCID.

### **What organisations and communities can do together**

#### Voluntary Sector Innovation Fund (VSIF)

12. The VSIF is a commitment to support the local voluntary and community sector to stimulate innovation in the sector over a 3 year period. The £3 million fund comes from Public Health Grant and the Better Care Fund.

13. To maximise the impact of funding, Ideas Alliance were commissioned to find out the important things that help local people be more independent, self-reliant and well and communities to become more resilient and connected. Over a 6 month period from November 2017 until May 2018, a storytelling approach was used to gather stories from residents and communities. Seven outcomes that our services, projects and programmes should deliver are:

- Opportunities to learn
- A sense of autonomy and control
- A sense of purpose

- Relationships and connections with others
- Being active
- A sense of belonging and community
- Opportunities to contribute and give back

14. The story telling also identified ‘golden nuggets’ of information that challenge the traditional way that partners work. For example, people at risk of loneliness told us that they want to get out of the house, while the services we specifically commission for loneliness, visit people in their own home.

15. The VSIF was launched in December 2017. In phase one 28 projects were funded. The projects targeted children and young people, adults and people with learning disabilities.

VSIF phases	Number of projects	Funding amount
Phase one	28 projects	£1,439,647.00
Phase two	- bids received June 2019	-

16. The projects, although not specific to addressing loneliness and isolation, must aim to achieve 2-3 of the outcomes listed above and a commitment to coproduction with local people and communities. By this process and expected outcomes, it makes a significant contribution of the goal of reducing loneliness and isolation. The VSIF team recognise the absence of projects aimed at older people in phase 1 and have encouraged projects working with older people to come forward for phase 2

#### The voice of older people

17. The storytelling work has informed key priorities for the Adults Alliance to focus on for the next five years 2017-2022. This has led to three priorities to deliver resilient, connected communities: changing the way we commission, developing community resilience skills and supporting networks so that the voice of communities can be heard

18. Further work is taking place with the Over 50s Forum to continue the conversations with a specific focus on older people. An initial meeting to follow up the storytelling outcomes took place on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2019.

#### Age UK Dudley

19. At least 39 community groups aimed at older people have been set up by local people in the period of two years 2017/18 – 2018/19. Age UK Dudley allocated either financial support and/ or support with promotion, group set up, volunteers and general advice. Groups are borough wide and range from leisure activities, exercise groups, health conditions support groups, social and friendship groups. Examples of groups are shown below:

Chatty café, Halesowen	No funding applied. Support with set up, ideas and promotion
Feel Good Choir, Dudley	Funding allocated – group running

Companionship café, Stourbridge	No funding required – support with setup, ideas & promotion- up and running
Friendship centre café, Dudley	Support with promotion and volunteers
Intergenerational Group, Upper Gornal	Funding allocated – group started
Anything Goes (formerly Knit and Knatter group), Brierley Hill	Group started – funding allocated, helped increased numbers attending
Fibrolmyalgia support group, Sedgley	Applied for funding, waiting for start date

20. Age UK Dudley are also working with nine GP Patient Involvement Groups across the borough to address loneliness and isolation. Funding has been allocated to support specific activities that bring people together. Examples include a monthly tea party (Three Villages Medical Practice, Wollaston), coffee mornings (Rangeways Surgery, Kingswinford) and development of a newsletter to encourage new members to join the group (Wordsley Surgery).

21. The Good Neighbour Scheme run by Age UK Dudley is a befriending scheme dedicated to reducing loneliness and social isolation. The scheme offers a Home Buddy scheme and a Telephone Buddy scheme. In 2018/19, six telephone buddy volunteers made 2,308 calls to 44 older adults. In the same year, 90 volunteers visited 139 older adults resulting in 6,780 visits. The scheme is jointly commissioned by Dudley CCG and Dudley Council. In February 2019, an independent evaluation found that 84% of the 61 clients surveyed said that the GNS helped them feel ‘more connected to other people’. Partnerships with businesses and supermarkets

### **What services can do for communities**

22. Dudley’s new model of care includes the Integrated Plus service which involves community link workers employed in the voluntary sector, connecting people with complex needs to community assets. The funding for this programme is time limited and work is underway to explore whether it should be continued and linked to the social prescribing commitments in the NHS Long term Plan.

#### **Training**

23. An e-learning module on loneliness and social isolation is available for Council staff and partners who may come into contact with people at risk of loneliness and isolation. It raises awareness of the impact of loneliness and social isolation, people who might be at risk, how to spot signs and what to do to help and support within the community. The e-learning module was launched in November 2018. To date (end of May 2019), 208 individuals have completed this training. The e-learning module can be accessed from the

Dudley Council public website

<https://www.melearning.co.uk/learning/dudley/>

#### Adult social care

24. The Pleased to Meet You scheme run by the Community Enabling Team was launched in June 2018. The scheme helps older adults who may be feeling lonely and isolated to stay positive and join in with community activities. Individuals are signposted to community groups and peer support. A telephone chat line was launched in September 2018 for older adults who wish to stay at home but would appreciate regular contact from this number 01384 812761.

25. Ongoing services such as the Living Well Feeling Safe Partnership, the Dementia Gateways and Carers Network continue to engage with people and are now using the UCLA 3-item questions to help establish a knowledge base.

#### Housing

26. The Housing Options and Support team are developing activities for their sheltered housing residents to maximise the use of their community facilities, this includes running games afternoon, coffee mornings, art club and bingo and working with Age UK Dudley cooking sessions and masterclasses.

#### Partnership with businesses

27. Twelve major chain supermarkets have been approached, of which two are out of area but still have customers from the borough. Stores have staff committed to supporting community development work – called Community Champions or PR Ambassadors. Many stores also sponsor local charities and/or have small pots of funding to support local community work. Below is a summary of the contributions made:

- Staff trained as dementia friends
- Support activities at the local community centre
- Provide chairs for rest and chat and informally do shop and chat for older customers.
- Undertake loneliness e-learning to raise awareness among staff to recognise loneliness
- Offer specific quiet shopping hours for people with autism which is also beneficial for older people
- Use the Dudley Dignity Charter
- Contribute to campaigns to raise awareness of the impact of loneliness and social isolation

#### Businesses in Kates Hill and Brierley Hill

28. Due to the increased risk of loneliness in Kate's Hill and Brierley Hill, the subgroup are currently scoping out businesses in Kates Hill and Brierley Hill to explore possibilities for them to contribute to healthy ageing and reducing loneliness.

<p><b>Key Points</b></p>	<p>29. Work has been underway by partners to address loneliness and isolation, working with local public services, the voluntary sector and businesses</p> <p>30. This work is currently not having the impact at scale needed to address this issue, although the development of the new DCID will enable us all to connect lonely people to community assets</p>
<p><b>Emerging issues for discussion</b></p>	<p>31. Current programmes that seek to reduce loneliness are delivered at a small scale compared to the size of the problem.</p> <p>32. At the same time as this work in Dudley, there have been a number of national developments including The UK Government Strategy plan to Improve the evidence base, embed loneliness across government policy and build a national conversation. The NHS 10 Year Plan also includes commitments to link people with challenges to assets in their local community through social prescribing.</p>
<p><b>Key asks of the Board/wider system</b></p>	<p>33. Explore what can partners do to upscale and make loneliness and social isolation everyone's business in 2019/20</p> <p>34. Consider what other services, programmes, interventions, communities can contribute to helping us identify people at risk of loneliness to enable targeting of resources</p> <p>35. Consider how can we apply national policy development in Dudley in ways that add value, including use of the improved evidence base and the roll out of social prescribing</p>
<p><b>Contribution to H&amp;WBB key goals:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Healthy weight</li> <li>• Reducing loneliness &amp; isolation</li> <li>• Reducing impact of poverty</li> </ul>	<p><b>Reducing Loneliness and Isolation</b></p>

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