



the care forum

## Bath and North East Somerset Health and Wellbeing Network

### Tackling Loneliness and Social Isolation - Progress

Thursday 9 July 2015

Frys Conference Centre, Keynsham

#### Introduction

There were four speakers at the meeting:

Andy Thomas - B&NES Council: Loneliness and Social Isolation and the Health and Wellbeing Strategy. Local strategic responses to tackling loneliness and social isolation

Rebecca Potter - B&NES Council: how the evolving early intervention and prevention strategy links with loneliness and social isolation

Barry Grimes - NHS Bath and North East Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group: *Your care your way* review of community services and social isolation

Mike Plows - Volunteer Centre B&NES: mapping local services and projects in the Chew Valley

Their presentations can be seen at:

<http://www.thecareforum.org/pagebath-and-north-east-somerset-health-and-social-care-events-archive.html>

and

<http://healthwatchbathnes.co.uk/health-and-wellbeing-network/meetings-and-reports/>

#### Useful Links

Voicebox survey on loneliness and isolation

<http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/services/your-council-and-democracy/local-research-and-statistics/wiki/loneliness-and-isolation>

Reports to July Cabinet:

*Cabinet Priorities*

<http://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/documents/s36705/E2776%20Cabinet%20Priorities.pdf>

*Strategic Review*

<http://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/documents/s36706/E2772%20Spending%20Review%20and%20Capital%20Programme%20Review.pdf>

Sign-up to Connecting Capacity E-Bulletin

<http://www.connectingcapacity.co.uk/contact/>

## Question and Answer

Q Are the statistics gender profiled at all?

A Can do a gender profile but the issue is whether there is enough data to make it statistically significant. Will need to check the data. This is usually broken down by age and area.

Q £38 funding cuts identified - how will this impact on the voluntary and community sector across B&NES?

A These are early days of the new administration. Look at the priorities for B&NES council online (see link above). There are big financial challenges but

## Workshop Feedback

There were 8 workshop groups. The groups looked at three key questions:

- What are the key issues highlighted for you by the presentations? Anything missing?
- What do you think about the solutions that have been talked about: What solutions can you see? Where do you fit?
- Are there any actions you can think of that we could be doing immediately?

## Group 1

### Issues

Information prescription: up to date information

Silo between health and community not effective: referral

Healthy aging teams - 80 - 84 year olds: referrals by GP. 83 most common age to be admitted.

### Solutions

Homeshare, Village Agents, Rural Social Enterprise companies - local people, night sitters, care agencies, end of life

One resource for community activity

Social meet ups - sharing houses and spaces.

Technology - crowd funding.

Community hub - Bromley-by-Bow

Sharing technologies

Animal befriending

Volunteers vital - more push

Social enterprise - pot of budgets

Directory of services where funding can be found - list of small, quick funders

Directory of funding streams so people can easily access start-up funding including quick cash, crowd funding.

Seed funding

Develop mobile libraries to include social prescribers

Funding a navigator to socially prescribe

### Immediate actions

- Well Aware monthly automated email reminder to update info?

- **Monthly meetings where Village Agents can meet local Multi-Disciplinary Teams to raise concerns about specific people**
- **Mobile services - navigator/social prescriber with a finger on what is happening in the area**
- **Promote the council service that provides funding support (Connecting Capacity)**

## **Group 2**

### **Issues**

Financial barriers - free at point of access? More commercial model?

Activities based on common interests rather than 'support needs'

Where to go for information

Too much information is only available on line not in printed form

How do you identify candidates for prevention measures?

How will B&NES generate income from prevention service users?

Money - where is it coming from?

Care leavers - lack of support when they leave care

How many of these people were in the care system - why they could be lonely

Sustainability longer term

People fall through gaps

Age threshold a barrier

Social media can be isolating

More pressure to run services cheaply means more pressure on volunteers - time is needed to invest in volunteers

### **Solutions**

Working with services who support people who are isolated (Wiltshire farm Foods) who go into homes to support people in their homes

What did Age UK achieve with the pyramid befriending scheme it started last year, aimed at reducing isolation through participating in activities - is it still running?

Homeshare West offers an intergenerational solution - both parties give and get support and companionship.

Borrow my Dog service

Time Bank plus

The Hope Guide

CAB - mobile van - rural villages.

CURO finding for residents groups

Care leavers - Teach them to budget, support groups, counselling

Shared language: prevention, integration, cohesion

Barriers to services due to financial thresholds

Constantly changing services

Solution to barriers to accessing information is more diverse forms of communication ie not all on internet

Volunteers need to be more involved

Volunteers - Share/signpost to other organisations if their needs or interests don't suit your organisation

Volunteers - They need support / High turnover/ Blurred lines

More emphasis on quantifying prevention outcomes ie feedback as opposed to numbers

Need to tap into more diverse groups eg youths to make sure befriending services are available

More integration - shared approach to sharing info

### **Immediate actions**

- **Do the statutory bodies realise how much paid staff time is needed to recruit/train/support/monitor volunteers? They aren't 'free'. They need to feel valued.**
- **Utilise what is already available - stop reinventing the wheel**

## **Group 3**

### **Issues**

Too much information but depends on group size and staff

In consultation the importance of the decision can be overlooked to take your view

How were the surveys conducted - ie phone? Letter? What is a 'voice box'?

Has the infrastructure of different agencies been taken into account? Different sizes and resources.

### **Solutions**

Directory to know who to contact - what is the better access for information

Join up services - organisation knows more services to inform service user eg mobility, finance, day care, equipment

Age UK working with all community groups and communities

Voluntary sector can provides services statutory services are unable to - can supplement other services

Any initiatives that will save time for voluntary sector organisations welcome eg better coordination between services

Linking up of information available really needed

Directories should not just be aimed at one sector group eg older people

### **Immediate actions**

- **Better signposting from the council regarding funding opportunities**
- **Directory for dementia related issues required**
- **Include references on the handouts in order to back up the statements made!**

## **Group 4**

### **Issues**

Transport

Communication - BSL

How do we bring together third sector and community services to ensure there is not duplication of services?

Transport is key - very limiting in B&NES

Infrastructure needs to grow with housing eg Bishop Sutton lots of housing

## **Solutions**

Village Agents interact directly with people - need to continue

Build on work in Chew Valley being done by Volunteer Centre

Wider mapping - extend to other areas?

Community Hub at St Johns for people over 55:

- Activity based
- Social inclusion
- Partnership working to achieve common goal
- Art, craft, exercise, dance, creative writing, health talks, information, advice, signposting, social trips
- Future: Hub on the move mobile service, intergenerational work

Volunteer training include BSL

Action on Hearing Loss

Support with community involvement

Co-working with Princes Trust, music festivals, fringe arts, Victoria Art Gallery, Holborne Museum, Bath City Farm

Social interaction and communication on-site in Bath: art, craft, IT, music, ceramics, woodwork

All staff BSL skills and teaching certificate

Peripatetic services in persons home - life skills including cooking, budgets etc

Employer volunteer scheme up to 1 hour a week

B&NES service based in Midsomer Norton, Radstock and Chew Valley run by Red Cross to assist in tackling rural isolation

Extra funding to organisations that map services in the area ie the piece of work the Volunteer Centre is doing in Chew Valley so everyone is aware of who is doing what in the area

## **Immediate Actions**

- **Mobile Hub - Mobile library services to include St Johns, Sirona, Red Cross service in Midsomer Norton etc and add other facilities**

## **Group 5**

### **Issues**

Beware of expecting volunteers to do things 'on the cheap'

Why no volunteer law to support them?

Directories will be larger and out of date etc.

Volunteers of working age tend to be vulnerable in some way - otherwise why aren't they earning? Reputable organisations often take advantage can be prepared to chuck them into a caseworkers caseload with little support - regard people as recipients of a favour - being given experience, something for CV etc.

Is mental health fully represented?

### **Solutions**

Ideas for 18 - 34 year olds: sport related activity, activities via work. Ask them! Practical skills.

Suicide prevention. Wellbeing College.

Split age groups - this banding is too wide.

Listening to clients - people who create services; strategy writer.

Coproduction

Sustainable funding

Active Aging Service

Be less risk averse - give people back their power.

Transition between life stages - when someone begins to lose their independence: perhaps create activities and courses to support this.

Come from a place of humility.

Support volunteers properly.

Work with communities for what they want.

Compassionate communities.

- To me this is an abdication of responsibility. They might not call - don't signpost - make links for people. Plug them into networks etc.

Create community movements - random acts of kindness; Good Gym project setting up in Bath.

Open Dialogue - amazing new service.

Transportation to groups/workshops.

Solution focused language for staff and carers.

Work on empowerment - give people the chance to make decisions for themselves.

Address historic, nonsensical fragmentation.

Focus on what is helpful and do more of them - this is the overlap between what you can do (even if this feels like a minute amount at this time) and what matters.

Joined up thinking - don't assume people know who you are. Even if members of a service used to use your service years ago there are new people working there now - you lose nothing by renewing a contact.

'Big Society' without David Cameron - it's not his idea!

Less paternalism and more user-led services

More wiki style - Well Aware proper descriptions not as in Hope Guide 'this is a group for ex-convicts, drug addicts etc - to entice people in.

Help each other with things we can do - we each do things better and things less well. We can do skills swap.

### **Immediate Actions**

- **Invest in one thing - not lots of piddly projects.**
- **Jobseekers Allowance to be volunteers, family volunteering.**
- **Council offer employees the opportunity to be volunteers themselves - 1 hour a week? Eg Sirona, big companies do this.**
- **Good communication - easy way to access information.**

## **Group 6**

### **Issues**

Sustainability of funding

Loneliness and isolation resulting from high mental health support needs

Gap when people are discharged eg age 18 young people leaving CAMHS

Young people leaving CAMHS feeling abandoned - lack of services.

GP services to be more aware of creative activities

Important to understand people's motivation

Importance of activities in Norton Radstock etc

Social prescribing - the voluntary sector services providing the activities need to be sustainable so that there are activities to be prescribed into - no money attached to social prescriptions.

The up and down of mental health service users in the community.

## **Solutions**

Volunteer pool getting smaller - need drive to encourage younger people and families to get involved

Peer support led groups in rural areas.

Encourage service users who come through services to be empowered to set up other support.

Knowledge of what support is available.

Support for young people leaving care to plug in to adult services - maintain their motivation.

Extend CAMHS service to age 25.

B&NES is encouraging staff to volunteer - can we encourage employers to release staff for opportunities?

Mental health statutory and GP services need to link in better with voluntary / third sector to ensure that people are not left without any support once commissioned services are pulled out.

Effective volunteer matching skills to role.

Navigators in strategic places (surgeries, one-stop-shop) to link people in with groups /resources /activities for prevention.

Funding for voluntary organisations to sustain services on offer.

Directory - we need it. Should include an opportunity section - who can I engage in my community?

Cycle: unemployment, matching is important, understanding why they want to do it, motivation - need to understand what that is, employment.

Importance of networks, knowing what others do, how we can work better and more effectively together, understanding why, root causes.

Youth employment project - a helping hand. Through volunteering enhance skills: reliance on volunteers is a common theme.

Platform - a space to share information

Use mobile libraries

Funding for voluntary organisations to sustain services on offer as social prescribing grows.

Need an understanding that funding for voluntary sector needs to be long term - part of the plan not just set up grants. To turn the triangle of care upside down - need to recognise this.

Need to be sure that something that is found to be successful is maintained. Don't need to have to keep on reinventing the wheel as this is costly and time consuming

Give support to volunteer agencies - funding skills and support. Help them to apply for it. Local authority could employ someone, save money given to voluntary agencies for action.

Link between volunteer groups and Job Centre. Work experience - carers.

Volunteering - what can people offer? Workers only commit to weekend work.

- Employers encourage staff to volunteer - find out more about what's out there
- Need to share information between professionals. Overlap - some other group can support.
- Need a hub for voluntary agencies.

Talk about volunteers - let the council I and Sirona give staff an hour a week to 'volunteer' - it's only volunteering if given with no pay - won't be time or cost effective.

Trading standards B&NES inform groups about scams to prevent vulnerable people suffering with isolation being taken advantage of.

Doorstep crime - can do a no cold calling zone working with police.

Rogue traders - buy with confidence scheme and support with confidence - promote in the future.

Like minded organisations need to have the ability to network - joined up.

### **Immediate Actions**

- **We keep doing 'straight away' - we need to plan strategically/look for gaps so we can adequately provide effective services**
- **Gap analysis - who are falling though the gaps?**
- **Information sharing between organisations for what's on offer**
- **Volunteering isn't free! Investment is required.**
- **Sustainable funding - support for organisation to apply for funding from grants etc.**

## **Group 7**

### **Issues**

1-2-1 support for mental health.

Rethink is primarily a tenancy based service. The people they support need emotional support too. Rethink staff are or can be the only people they see. Continuity is really important - someone external so they don't have to rely on/'be a burden' to their family.

It would be good to change the remit so that Rethink staff can work in this way and provide this kind of support within their capacity.

People with autism in their early 20s don't want someone to come and chat, they want someone to go and do something with

Long-term funding for befriending services isn't in place - however we can look at building up infrastructure in which these services can be provided eg volunteer workforce

Manvers Street one stop shop not very accessible - community transport feel that these tend to focus on physical need / disability, but please look at autism friendly too and dementia

Housing office and accommodation not very accessible.

How do we attract more volunteers - particularly younger people? Organisations and communities tend to rely on older people / members

How do we respect and support small groups eg rural groups and voluntary and community groups to run with increased interest or numbers? What if groups want to stay small? How do we offer those activities to people despite this?

### **Solutions**

Befriending - options for drop-in eg BASS

Home visits eg Age UK

NAS has schemes in other areas - K25 a year to coordinate - could we have a West of England group?

Butterflies in Keynsham say there is little support for people with autism to get back in to work - NAS to put them in touch with Sirona.

Corporate social responsibility - B&NES council do this and others

Role of elected members in recruiting volunteers and promoting roles in the community?

Student communities and suburban loneliness - creative roles for students and volunteers

Organisations should look into how they can share resources, capacity, training and so on.

### **Immediate actions**

- **Flexible/creative commissioning processes that include service users/carers and professionals to allow services to provide what is needed/what they know people want.**

## **Group 8**

### **Issues**

Older people mixing with younger people

Human contact lost through social media

### **Solutions**

Holding hands - buddy system (for older people) school buddy system (for younger people)  
exchange teaching - older groups and younger groups working together eg changing a plug, using a computer: social media isolating/ social media meeting groups (including physical activity)

Young people and older people are two groups that work well together and need each other. These are the two groups with a need to be introduced to each other as both groups have almost identical needs

You don't need a lot of money or imaginative projects just a way of bringing both groups together and finding a way of keeping them together

Lonely older people feel that their independence is as important as life itself. If you are going to engage with these people it must be from the perspective of how they can help others not how older people's needs can be met.

Vocational courses need to lead to 'work' - encourage young people in to education and training to meet other people

Older people and nursery age children going to 'day services' together! Cut down on the need for child care staff and stop the need for entertainment in day services for older people.

Get older people and younger people together - service users teaching young people living skills

Mobile shop

U3A input - convenors do keep in touch with group members - see how they are doing 'haven't seen you in a while' etc.

Older people need buddies to help encourage attendance of groups in community

Media about care and residential care puts people off - more positive media stories.

Parenting classes.

Go back to the 'good old days' - respect, good morals and values.

Free colleges teaching life skills for young people eg cookery and housework and finances.

Promoting organisations like NCF to help young people with social skills and confidence and being a citizen.

Work for job seekers allowance - volunteer work, teaching older people social media, dog walking so older people can keep pets.

18 - 34 year olds work life balance - new ways of working have affected ways people make friends: technology, remote working - employers need to create more social opportunities for staff. Team events.

Job experience - looking into the computer not looking at the customer.

### **Immediate actions**

- **Owning a pet can address feeling isolated. We do not currently offer older people support to be able to continue to own a pet eg dog walking services - could the dog's home help here?**
- **Join U3A**
- **Boot camp (through school) holidays for young. (national service style?)**
- **Club for retired people to share their skills and knowledge with each other and youth groups - exchange of skills and life skills.**

## **Evaluation**

### **What was the most significant outcome of the event for you?**

- The emphasis/ importance of volunteering going forward
- The update and intentions
- Networking - finding out about other organisations
- Meeting new people
- Networking (6 people)
- Huge amount of new ideas.
- Networking around isolation and prevention.
- I'm not sure there was one.
- Meeting other members of the community, encouraged by the work being done in the area.
- Knowing that there are others working toward the same goals.
- Information and networking
- The table discussions
- Sharing ideas
- Meeting other people from organisations
- A better understanding of council's view of how these services are expected to support social prescribing moving forwards to tackle these issues.
- Many ideas from people working in the community

### **Do you have any suggestions regarding topics/speakers for future meetings?**

- Sustainability!
- What older people say they want to help tackle their loneliness
- Navigators.
- Council signposting for funding?
- Keep talking about isolation.
- More of the same subject to ensure it is continued.
- How all the information on services available will be pulled together and then shared.
- Dementia - I am a support worker for this group
- Funding sources - more people attending from the local community.

### **Are there any other comments you would like to make?**

- Great speakers and fantastic discussions.
- Smaller/ focused networking a bit like speed dating on areas of interest eg older peoples services

- Thank you for organising a fab event!
- Very clean venue.
- Employers to think about how to encourage team events that would enable younger people to make friends.
- Room pillars an obstruction.
- None
- An enjoyable morning meeting and sharing.
- Thank you.
- I felt I know what was said already, it was old news nothing new was said. I'm going away not feeling anything new - sorry.
- The event stimulated some very innovative ideas. Well done!
- Really enjoyable and worthwhile.
- Thank you for a good session.
- Access confusing - I'm glad I've been before.
- Fantastically well attended - good range of organisations - although no Village Agents
- Keep the group going and the information coming!
- Really useful meeting.