

Report to the Cabinet

Meeting to be held on Thursday, 6 July 2023

Report of the Director of Public Health

Part I

Electoral Division affected:
(All Divisions);

Corporate Priorities:
Caring for the vulnerable;

Tackling Loneliness and Social Isolation in Over 50s

Contact for further information:

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Brief Summary

In early 2023, the communities team carried out listening exercises with residents and partners. Evaluation of these listening exercises by the team has identified a number of projects which will provide an effective use of the available budget to address loneliness in over 50s.

Recommendation

Cabinet is asked to approve the award of grant funding to the organisations as set out in this report.

Detail

Throughout January and February 2023, the communities team carried out listening activities with people already accessing activities, to gather information about their experience of feeling lonely and what helped them to become more socially connected. Similarly, Age UK also carried out similar listening exercises with their Good Day Call users, which is a service connecting those who are chronically lonely and housebound. The data from this listening provided a strong sample of community experiences and opinions, against which to sense check decision making.



The team also ran three stakeholder events in Central, North and East Lancashire inviting representatives from a range of voluntary, community, faith, social enterprise, and public sector bodies working in the sphere of loneliness and social isolation.

Findings

The team found that there was a plethora of activity taking place across Lancashire, together with methods to engage with those less visible.

The following themes were identified as areas for further development:

- Volunteer recruitment and retention.
- Increasing sense of community.
- Increasing understanding of funding and commissioning.
- Access to transport.
- Directory of services – including activities taking place at different times and considering travel options and abilities.
- Community celebration and connection events.

The following were highlighted as issues in specific areas:

- **North**
 - Long befriending waiting lists
 - Establish a Fylde network based on the Healthier Fleetwood model which is an established and successful voluntary and health sector network
- **East**
 - Activities for those whom English is not their first language
 - Activities for men
- **Central**
 - Lack of a voluntary community faith and social enterprise infrastructure organisation
 - "Talking Tables" development. A model where people join tables in a community space to connect and chat with others. This is running successfully across South Ribble and needs further support to develop across the rest of Central Lancashire.

In light of the findings above, it is recommended that the following awards will provide an effective use of the available funds to address loneliness in over 50s:

Organisation	Project Title	Location	Amount
The Sewing Rooms	Age of Inspiration	Burnley, Pendle, Rossendale, Ribble Valley, Hyndburn, Fylde, Preston and Chorley	£35,000
Age UK	Good Day Calls	Lancashire 12	£30,000



Age UK	Reaching Communities	Lancaster, Fylde and Wyre	£10,000
Burnley, Pendle and Rossendale Community Voluntary Service	Social Isolation Grants	Burnley, Pendle and Rossendale	£15,000
Hyndburn and Ribble Valley Community Voluntary Service	Social Isolation Grants	Hyndburn and Ribble Valley	£10,000
Total			£100,000

The Sewing Rooms

The Sewing Rooms, based in Skelmersdale, are experienced in running community celebration events across Lancashire. The Age of Inspiration project will provide up to 100 participants (aged fifty and over) with an interactive guide to the '5 Ways to Wellbeing' to improve personal wellbeing, i.e. promoting:

- connect
- be active
- take notice
- keep learning
- give

The events will be attended by voluntary organisations, to join up local offers of activities and support to those who participate. Attendees will be asked to make a pledge to support themselves or their communities, using their own skills and experience. The pledges are followed up after the event, through phone calls and offers of support from The Sewing Rooms. The aim is to provide a sense of connection and community, and encourage volunteering, as well as raising awareness of the actions everyone can take to improve personal wellbeing.

Age of Inspiration events will be available in all Lancashire districts, with some district councils initiating events themselves. Therefore, the proposal is to fund and run the events in Burnley, Pendle, Rossendale, Ribble Valley, Hyndburn, Fylde, Preston and Chorley.

Age UK – Good Day Calls

In January 2023 Cabinet agreed to fund a six-month extension to the Adult Social Care contract with Age UK to deliver Good Day Calls (befriending calls), with a view to the provider finding alternative sustainable funding going forward.

Age UK – Reaching Communities

The funding is to be provided as match funding for a Reaching Communities bid for "Loneliness Navigators" (working title) to support those who are chronically lonely to access activities. Although Age UK's bid is considered to be strong, should the bid



be unsuccessful, Age UK will re-purpose this funding to increase the capacity of the Good Day Calls service.

Social Isolation Grants

The local Community Voluntary Service to administer a grant scheme to address social isolation, particularly in communities where English is not the first language and for men. This links to the results from the listening exercises as outlined earlier in the report.

Who will approve applications?

Both Community Voluntary Services have an existing grant approval panel and process, comprising of their Chief Executive Officer and leading grant officer. It is proposed that an officer from the Councils communities team will be a member of each panel too. The applications will be considered against pre-existing criteria including:

- Areas of high deprivation.
- How the project tackles loneliness.
- Whether it serves people for whom English is a second language.
- Whether it serves men.
- Whether there is existing activity in the same area.

Grants will still be considered if other activities are running in the same area, as long as it is clear how the project compliments existing activities or plugs a gap that any existing activity leaves.

Who is eligible to apply?

Voluntary Community Faith and Social Enterprise organisations with a governing document.

What value can be applied for?

£500 - £3,000 per grant.

Consultations

As identified above, the communities team held face to face consultations with 107 people from across Lancashire, who were already accessing activities. The consultations focused on their experiences of loneliness and what helped them become connected. Age UK also shared information from 80 Good Day Call users.

The majority of those consulted, stated that they were lonely due to personal reasons such as bereavement (40%) or an absent family member (32%). When asked about how their health and wellbeing impacted on their loneliness, the majority stated that mental health (33%) mobility (28%) and chronic illness (22%) had a negative impact on their sense of community.



Twenty one percent of consultees stated that more activities should be provided upon further investigation the team found that this was generally due to a lack of knowledge of what is already on locally, and consequently there is a need to promote existing opportunities more effectively.

Implications:

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

Risk management

Stakeholder Management

The communities team has received positive feedback regarding the methodology utilised and findings identified from the listening exercises. These proposals would help further strengthen the relationship with the voluntary sector and other key stakeholders.

Financial

The investment to address loneliness and social isolation in the over 50s will be funded from the Public Health Reserve.

List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact/Tel
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None		
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Reason for inclusion in Part II		
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