

Penistone Area Council

Discussion paper PAC April 11th 2024

Supporting Vulnerable and Isolated Older People in the Penistone Area

Purpose of the paper

- To provide members with a reminder and update of support provided by PAC contracted services to vulnerable and isolated older people in the Penistone area since 2016
- To advise members of current and emerging needs to support older people in the Penistone area
- To invite discussion on how PAC members may wish to support this priority in future

Background

Since 2016 PAC has identified the need to support vulnerable and isolated older people in the Penistone area by providing a holistic approach to address social isolation and loneliness and has provided financial support for services that will address this. The focus of these services has been:

- One to one support delivered through a volunteer led be-friending model (Good Neighbours), providing contact within the home, as well as supporting individuals to participate in group based activities to make wider social connections, reduce isolation and improve health and wellbeing
- Group based activities with an emphasis on working with the community to develop solutions that will meet local needs, create opportunities for sustainable activities (including working with Barnsley U3A), engage people in their local area and provide tangible improvement in health and wellbeing.
- Addressing transport needs to ensure individuals can participate and remain connected through localised links with Barnsley Dial-a-Ride and a bespoke community car scheme delivered by volunteer drivers.
- Providing dedicated welfare advice and information to ensure quality of life in later years, and links to other dedicated services that can support with specific needs (such as Adult social care, dementia support, and warm home initiatives)

Following an initial commissioning exercise, Age UK Barnsley was successful in gaining the first contract to address these needs over a two year period from 2017-2019. The learning from this initial contract has since led to a range of grant funded contracts that have provided more tailored activities; to improve reach into the communities that make up the Penistone area, create and maintain a network of support services for older people in the Penistone area, increase engagement with men, improve intergenerational connections, provide support during the Covid-19 pandemic, address physical and mental health issues associated with post pandemic outcomes, respond to emerging rises in the incidence of dementia, and support with cost of living increases and food insecurity. Age UK Barnsley has been successful in tendering for all grant opportunities offered by PAC since 2019 and has continued to achieve the outcomes required from these. The current contract for these services expires at the end of June 2023, so it is timely to review the needs of the area to ascertain how PAC may wish to support these in the future.

Current and emerging need in the area.

The last census (2021) showed that the Penistone area continues to have a relatively high ageing population with 26% of residents in the Penistone East ward and 20.5% of residents in Penistone

West ward being over the age of 65. Within that, 13.3% of those over 65 in the Penistone East Ward and 13.4% of over 65s in the Penistone west ward live alone. Whilst this alone does not necessarily mean that there is a high demand for services to support older people in the area, the work of Age UK over the last year (as presented to PAC by Age UK on February 15th2024) has demonstrated the continued value and benefit of service intervention by the following:

- 963 people engaged through a total of 3,975 interventions
- An average increase of +4 on the wellbeing scoring and -1 on loneliness scoring systems used by Age UK after interventions with service users
- 61 people supported through the information and advice service including 33% 70-79 yrs ,43% 80yrs+ and providing £1,630,044.70 Benefit Gains for the Penistone Area since July 2022
- Mild cognitive stimulation therapy (MCST)pilot chosen to be delivered for the Penistone area to support future learning for interventions to support with dementia showed positive results for a non-drug based intervention and has generated the Happy Vibes dementia café in Penistone
- Continued demand for support with transport 481 community car journeys made over a 12 month period 2022/2023 undertaken by just 2 volunteers
- Good uptake of physical activities that support the BOPPAA <https://boppaa.ageukbarnsley.org.uk> programme for the Penistone area – many were initiated through the original PAC contracts with Age UK by encouraging individuals to engage within their communities and participate in mild to moderate exercise to improve health and wellbeing
- Encouraging a community approach to an Age Friendly Penistone

It also worth noting that in addition to the work of Age UK in the area, community led response does make a great impact (although this is not currently measured), and there has been a recent growth in this activity e.g independent Men In Sheds group, Pendon House, Silkstone breakfast club and Crane Moor activities.

Whilst great strides have been taken to address needs over the last few years, particularly in relation to the effects of the pandemic on older people, we know that there are still emerging issues affecting older people in the Penistone area:

- growing incidence of 'older' older people in the Penistone area which presents new challenges such as dementia, frailty, increased risk of isolation due to limited mobility
- rising costs of living in the last year has raised issues of food insecurity and keeping warm over the winter period, reaching those most in need
- Still some incidence of lack of confidence to come out and socialise following the pandemic
- There are still pockets within the Penistone area where there are few opportunities for older people e.g. Ingbirchworth, Hood Green
- Improving connections to wider services that support older people, increasing understanding for service users
- Engaging with 'younger' older people, recently bereaved , new to the area
- Volunteering support for one to one be-friending through Age UK has started to plateau in recent months
- Reductions in some bus services have impacted on access to key services such as GP surgeries

Potential Future support from PAC to Support Vulnerable and Isolated Older People.

As a result of current contracts with Age UK finishing at the end of June 2024, achievements made to date to address this priority, and newly emerging issues in the Penistone area, PAC members are asked to consider how they might want to respond, and whether this continues to be a priority for spend.

Key questions for consideration and discussion:

- Has the approach taken previously through the grant funded contracts sufficiently addressed the needs that were previously identified?
- Is there sufficient information /intelligence available to support any decision to continue to fund this approach in the future?
- Are there any alternatives you would like to explore for meeting this priority?
- What would you like to see in any future procurement exercise to help PAC to meet this priority?

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