

The Emerging Central Area Council Social Isolation Programme Framework

Social isolation and loneliness are complex issues that cannot be dealt with in silos. The following summarises the issues across the Central Area;

- Loneliness and isolation is an issue across the lifespan and is having a significant impact on people's wellbeing.
- Many groups exist, but they are disparate, unconnected and do not share learning or support each other.
- There are groups of people, such as middle-aged men who do not engage with traditional solutions.
- People do not always know what is available in their community.
- Engaging participants is difficult, and it can take many months or years for a group to become vibrant.
- Information about groups often depends on word of mouth as people are unaware of or unable to access things such as Live Well Barnsley, U3A's The Buzz, Age UK's Love Later Life booklet and Social Media Groups
- Access to appropriate spaces and funding can be problematic
- 'Group Leaders' are often without support and as such sustainability and succession planning is an issue.
- Befriending schemes are successful for very isolated people with complex needs when the community is involved, and sufficient local volunteering capacity is available.

Target Group

The service will be aimed at lonely and/or isolated people *and* households affected by Covid-19. It is anticipated that a significant proportion of the clients accessing the service will be older people and vulnerable adults, including males who have an increased risk of suicide as a result of social isolation and loneliness.

We are looking to fund a programme enabling an integrated approach to what we know is an 'all age' problem within the central area, using local area-based coordination which supports the following principles:

- The right to citizenship, responsibilities and opportunities.
- Valued relationships and personal networks.
- Access to relevant, timely and accessible information to inform decision making.
- Recognising and nurturing individual, family and community gifts and assets.
- Recognising the natural expertise and leadership of people/families labelled as vulnerable.
- The right to plan, choose and control supports/resources.
- The value and complementary nature of formal services as a backup to natural supports.

In order to achieve the goal of combatting social isolation and loneliness across the lifespan in the wards that make up the Central Council Area, strategic and coordinated transformational change is required.

Much of this change can be achieved by implementing an Asset-Based Community Development approach with Local Area Coordination. This will be achieved by acting on the following recommendations and implementing actions at a Community, Associational and Institutional levels.

Principles for the framework:

- Innovative solutions are being sought to improve the health and wellbeing of adults living in the Central Council area by reducing loneliness and isolation.
- Proposals should not duplicate but complement existing provision, should add value and aim to link with other services procured by the Central Area Council and the wider council and health partners.
- Proposals need to reflect the differing needs and challenges of an all age approach, with specific vulnerabilities identified and addressed.
- Proposals need to reflect the differing needs and challenges of the individual five wards, with specific challenges (in each ward) identified and addressed.
- Proposals should provide coverage and a spread of provision across the five wards. This may well be a mix of different projects.
- Proposals should be for activities / projects providing exciting and interventions to challenge and develop the potential of people.
- The service is likely to be made up of interventions that have an evidence-based rationale for reducing isolation and loneliness within communities
- Residents who live in one of the five wards that make up the Central Area should be involved in the development and delivery of provision
- Creative solutions are sought to encourage new and different people to participate in the activities provided as part of the programme i.e. those who are most hard to reach.
- Providers are encouraged to join forces and match skills and experience i.e. proven skills and experience around outreach matched with a provider with a track record in delivery and outreach
- All projects/providers will be expected to help support and contribute to a Central Area Social Isolation celebration event
- Promoting social action, volunteering and addressing sustainability should be an integral part of any proposals
- Where possible, work experience placements, apprenticeships and the use of local labour, where appropriate apprentice opportunities and local labour should also be built into proposals.

Aims and Objectives of the Framework:

- Reduce loneliness and isolation and improve physical health and emotional wellbeing
- Enable Central Area residents to participate in their community and developing social contacts that are sustainable, increase independence and social inclusion, in the home and the community and within the workforce
- Provide a baseline of information and understanding of the levels, complexity and extent of social isolation across the Central Area with a view to delivering better targeted and appropriate services across the area
- Provide universal access to good quality information in a variety of formats and methods about local services, increase awareness of and access to shops, leisure, health services, housing, libraries, giving choice and control for people to access services of their choice.
- Providing the skills and training for people to access digital information where appropriate.
- Encourage lifelong learning and skill sharing across the community recognising the skills and experience of older people in the community and identify any intergenerational learning opportunities.
- Recognise the health and social benefits of staying active through work and linking services to improve employability and re-entry to the labour market i.e. where people have experienced time out of the workforce as a result of Covid-19.
- Build on the success of the Covid-19 emergency community responder volunteers and further engage neighbourhoods to identify ways they can reach out to and support isolated and lonely members of their community e.g. use community connectors to connect people together for mutual benefit and to strengthen community exchanges
- Increase opportunities for volunteers and volunteering across the Central area and supporting volunteers to work with the provider with a view to longer term sustainability
- Fill gaps in provision or facilitating new groups and activities that are identified by local people
- Work with partners, agencies, Central Area Council, Ward Alliances and commissioned services in an integrated way to better coordinate services and activities across the Central Area and better tackle some of the key issues which prevent people from living healthy active lives.
- Promote a positive image of older and vulnerable people and enabling contact between socially isolated and lonely people in the area including intergeneration projects and celebration events

The framework will also contribute to building the social capital agenda by:

- Supporting people to take part in the local community, having social contact and experiencing friendships, which is critical to a good quality of life, health and wellbeing.
- Motivating and incentivising volunteers to 'give something back' and becoming valued contributors by providing opportunities to use their skills, knowledge and expertise to help others live independently.
- Promoting a positive image of vulnerable and older people.
- Working with other service providers in an integrated way to tackle some of the key issues which prevent people at risk of social isolation and loneliness from living healthy, active lives.