

BARNSELEY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

**North Area Council Meeting:
23rd November 2020
Agenda Item: 7**

**Report of North Area Council
Manager**

COVID-19 Recovery Supporting Older People in the North Area

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report is a proposal to extend funding that will support older people in the COVID-19 Recovery Phase.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1. **That members discuss the benefits of Age UK supporting older people in the North Area.**
- 2.2. **Confirm if they wish to fund Age UK Barnsley to provide support for older people in the North Area for a further 6 months.**
- 2.3. **Member confirm the funding for the Winter Warmer Packs.**

3. Background

- 3.1. On the 11th March 2020 the World Health Organisation declared the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak as a global pandemic. Lockdown in the UK was introduced on the 23rd March 2020 in an attempt to control the spread of the virus. People in at risk groups, the over 70s and people with underlying health conditions were required to 'shield' to reduce the risk of contracting the virus.
- 3.2. Barnsley was quick to set up and establish a Covid-19 Emergency Contact Centre. This dealt with emergency food aid, prescriptions, essential shopping and befriending. The response was coordinated by BMBC officers and largely supported by Community Responder Volunteers.
- 3.3. In the North Area all of the commissioned providers and flexed their contract so ensure that those in need were supported. Much of the provision was adapted to online and telephone support. However, the North Area doesn't have a specific commissioned service for older people.
- 3.4. During lockdown the North Area has benefited from the existing relationship that North East, South and Penistone Area Council's currently have with Age UK who is commissioned in these three areas. Age UK have supported over 50 elderly residents in the North Area who do not have support networks in place during lockdown. This has included telephone befriending, shopping delivery, prescription collection, wellbeing boxes and the delivery of a menu of home-

based activities. 8 volunteers have been regularly active on this service. Age UK have reported that only 35% of the people that they are supporting are online.

- 3.5. In the UK approximately 88% of the deaths from Covid-19 has been of people aged over 65. The chances of the older person dying from the virus increase in proportion to their increasing age and many of Age UK's service users are 80+. The risk from the virus is still potentially much more serious for older people and so they are wary of getting back to normal. Some of these people have lost confidence and mobility, compounded by the fact that social norms have changed while people have been shielding.
- 3.6. At the July meeting the North Area Council agreed to fund Age UK for 6 months to support older people in the North Area.
- 3.7. Although lockdown restrictions were eased in the UK during August and September, lockdown was reintroduced in the Autumn of 2020 as infection rates began to rise once more.

4. Benefits of having Age UK's support for older residents of the North Area during winter 2020, include but are not limited to:

- a) Age UK specialise in providing support to over 55s, although a large proportion of their clients are 80years+.
- b) Support is focussed on people who do not have local support networks.
- c) Support with low mood and wellbeing
- d) Age UK have the capacity to form individual plans to help each person get mobile, providing them with encouragement, and exercises to strengthen and prevent falls.
- e) Stimulating activities will be provided to help residents stay engaged and keep their minds active.
- f) The service will aim to ensure that older people will feel valued, 'better' in themselves, more resilient and better able to deal with the restrictions and anxieties they currently face.
- g) Age UK's service delivery provides additionality to the existing service provision in the North Area (both commissioned and grant funded).

- 4.1. At the September meeting Members requested that the Area Manager ask Age UK if there were able to continue to deliver in the area for a further 6 months from January 2021. This has been actioned and Age UK are keen to continue delivery.

5. Partnership working and avoiding duplication

- 5.1. Since the last meeting the Health and Wellbeing priority sub group has met with the following providers: DIAL's Warm Connections, Emmanuel Church's Older People's Project, Age UK, Making Space, Adult Social Care.
- 5.2. All the providers are continually adapting their service delivery to reflect the current Covid safe working practises and lockdown restrictions.

- 5.3. It was agreed to run a Winter Warmer Pack distribution across the area. Packs have been funded by: DIAL, Age UK and Making Spaces (210 packs).
- 5.4. It is recommended that the North Area Council match the funding to ensure that sufficient packs can be purchased.
- 5.5. Packs cost £13.75 each and contain:
- ❖ Covered hot water bottle
 - ❖ Fleece blanket
 - ❖ 1 pair thermal fingerless gloves
 - ❖ Thermal hat
 - ❖ Insulated travel mug
 - ❖ Pair of hand warmers
 - ❖ Packaged in a branded cotton tote bag
- 5.6. Packs will predominantly be distributed by DIAL, Age UK and BMBC Adult Services.
- 5.7. The packs will also include falls prevention information supplied by BMBC's Public Health team.

6. Proposed Investment by the North Area Council

- 6.1. Proposal: That the Area Council allocate £10,000 to Age UK to deliver the benefits listed in section 4 for a period of six months, in addition to the original six months agreed in July 2020. This would run from January 2021 to June 2021.
- 6.2. The members of the North Area Council's Health and Wellbeing Priority Working Group and the Area Chair have been consulted on this proposal and have given it their support, prior to this being included in the meeting agenda.
- 6.3. Proposal that the North Area Council contribute £2,000 to purchase additional winter warmer packs.

7. Next Steps

- 7.1. Members are asked to confirm if they wish to fund Age UK to support elderly residents in the North Area during winter 2020 and into spring recovery.
- 7.2. Members are asked to confirm the winter warmer packs funding.

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