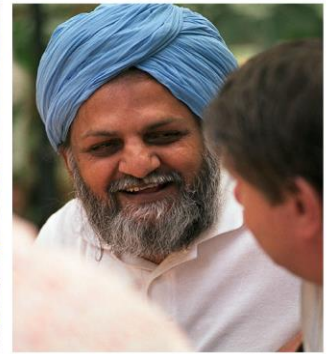
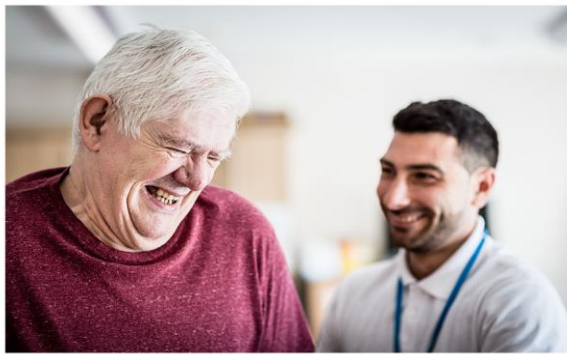
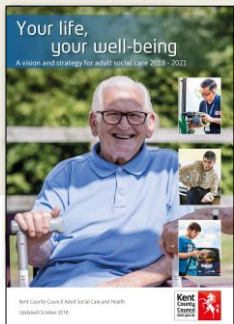


Scrutiny Committee – 26 July 2019



Penny Southern, Corporate Director – Adult Social Care and Health



Your life, your well-being

Social Isolation and Loneliness Select Committee Action Plan

The Loneliness and Social Isolation Action Plan supports the Government Strategy 'A connected society: a strategy for tackling loneliness – laying the foundations for change' (published on 15 October 2018).

Key themes for tackling loneliness were identified from the Government call for evidence and it is highly likely that similar themes will emerge in the suggested field work investigations outlined within the Loneliness and Social Isolation Action Plan.

A Task and Finish Group has been established to develop the action plan which builds on the concept of a '**whole system**' approach where everyone should play a role in connecting and collaborating to tackle loneliness, both across Kent County Council and the wider community.

The action plan does not address any associated resource or budget implications that may be required in the implementation of feasible options and these areas will need to be scoped and costed as the action plan is developed.



Social Isolation and Loneliness Select Committee Action Plan

Recommendation One

The Committee recognises that loneliness and social isolation are not issues that affect older people exclusively. The Committee recommends that the Adult Social Care and Health Directorate leads further investigations into the prevention or reduction of loneliness and social isolation amongst specific groups of people who are also likely to be impacted, such as young people, disabled people and carers.

Response to recommendation

Field work with identified groups of people who use Adult Social Care and Health services, organisations who support people who might use those services and local communities/groups to identify opportunities and options to prevent and/or reduce loneliness and social isolation across Kent will be undertaken.

Social Isolation and Loneliness Select Committee Action Plan

Recommendation Two

KCC should produce a corporate strategy aimed at tackling loneliness and social isolation in Kent. The strategy should set out clear objectives, as well as roles and responsibilities, and should strengthen coordination and collaboration between KCC services.

Response to recommendation

Corporate Management Team agreed that relevant elements of this recommendation would be discharged through the development of the civil society strategy and work on developing the civil society strategy is underway. The civil society strategy will set out or highlight the role of the Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise (VSCE) sector in tackling social isolation and will highlight KCC's commitment to work such as social prescribing, community wardens/community connectors.

The civil society strategy will be developed with engagement from partner agencies and the care sector as well as outreach programmes and the voluntary sector.

Social Isolation and Loneliness Select Committee Action Plan

Recommendation Three

KCC should organise a high-profile event to launch its strategy. This should involve partner organisations from the public, private and voluntary sectors. A key objective of this event should be to promote closer collaboration in order to prevent or reduce loneliness and social isolation in Kent.

Response to recommendation

It is proposed that this will link in with the launch of the civil society strategy – however the Task and Finish Group identified a number of other avenues which could be explored to promote closer collaboration.

Work on developing a tool kit around common language to ‘connect and reach out’ will be undertaken and will be promoted via a number of other routes including:

- Every Mind Matters
- Kent Show
- Loneliness Week
- Photo call opportunities

Social Isolation and Loneliness Select Committee Action Plan

Recommendation Four

KCC should work with the Government, local partner agencies and the voluntary sector to enable Kent residents to access, from both a single online source and a single contact number, information on services, activities and support that could help to reduce their risk of feeling lonely.

KCC should also consider the opportunity of volunteering in the Government's pilots to explore how better use of data can help to make it easier for people to find local activities, services and support.

Response to recommendation

A number of platforms already exist including the Touch a New World' offer from LRA which offers pads and digital support to support isolated people at home – “borrow an iPad for up to 8 weeks, have 8 x 1 hour weekly guided sessions with a dedicated volunteer”

Development of the tool kit as set out in recommendation 3 will provide a source of information to both Kent residents and KCC staff.

Signposting to a single point of access is also a core outcome of the wellbeing core offer contract.

Social Isolation and Loneliness Select Committee Action Plan

Recommendation Five

The Committee fully endorses the social prescribing model, which enables organisations to refer people – including those who suffer from loneliness – to a range of services that offer support for social, emotional or practical needs. The Committee also endorses the pilot to assess the effectiveness of Kent Community Wardens acting as “community connectors” and playing a central role in the identification, referral and support of people who suffer from loneliness and social isolation. The Committee recommends that, if necessary, funding should be found to ensure that this project is completed. If the pilot is successful, an understanding will be needed of how the role of Community Wardens would fit alongside social prescribing structures in the county.

Response to recommendation

There are currently 70 community wardens, a wholly discretionary service which responds to whatever their local communities’ needs are, but often a big part of any warden’s role is supporting those who are socially isolated, or at risk of becoming so. That support takes whatever guise the individual needs it to, often coordinating other agencies on behalf of the individual, and protecting them from fraud/criminal targeting. They receive their referrals from a huge array of organisations, including ASCH, Police, VCS, Kent Fire.

Social Isolation and Loneliness Select Committee Action Plan

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Response to recommendation

The Growth, Environment and Transport (GET) Directorate offers a suite of services and community assets that can receive social prescriptions, and through a number of workstreams including the emerging Community Based Wellbeing Services and working with voluntary and community sector is looking at how best these can be signposted to and how they can be shaped to better receive social prescriptions.

Social Isolation and Loneliness Select Committee Action Plan Recommendation Six

KCC's Public Transport team should investigate the feasibility of expanding the Kent Karrier service, and should continue to offer financial support and information to those who wish to introduce or expand a community transport service.

Response to recommendation

At the moment this is a wholly discretionary service limited to the over 85s OR if you have a medical condition that makes travelling on public transport difficult OR you live in a rural area more than 500 metres from a bus route or railway station.

Work on is identifying other user groups that would benefit vis a vis social isolation, as well as understanding current geographical gaps and the existing role of the voluntary and community sector in this same type of provision will be undertaken.

Social Isolation and Loneliness Select Committee Action Plan

Recommendation Seven

KCC's Public Transport team should encourage organisations in Kent's transport sector to develop ways of connecting people – such as the Talking Bus service - so that transport networks play the greatest possible role in tackling loneliness and social isolation.

Response to recommendation

Big Conversation is about five pilot new or amended bus routes and methods (eg taxi bus, hopper service, feeder service) of provision to maintain and improve accessibility for those without an alternative means of travel in rural areas.

Pilots are all just underway and will run for twelve months, but will help KCC understand how to keep vital public transport bus routes in rural areas appropriate (ie can use smaller vehicles if user numbers low, exploring how link in better with existing commercial routes.....) and viable.

<https://www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/travelling-around-kent/big-conversation>

Social Isolation and Loneliness Select Committee Action Plan

Recommendation Eight

KCC should work with the Government to develop a Kent-focused campaign to raise awareness of the issues of loneliness and social wellbeing. The campaign should provide information including:

- the negative consequences of loneliness and social isolation
- the support that is available and how to access it.

Response to recommendation

This recommendation will be discharged as part of the response to recommendation 4 – the development and launch of the ‘Connect and Reach Out’ tool kit and link in with national campaigns such as the Social Isolation Week and Adult Safeguarding Week.

Social Isolation and Loneliness Select Committee Action Plan

Recommendation Nine

KCC should sign up to the Government's pledge to support its employees by addressing loneliness and building social connections. KCC should also encourage local employers across all sectors to adopt the pledge to support their own employees' social wellbeing and health.

Response to recommendation

The Task and Finish group propose the wording of the recommendation be changed to 'work with' local employers.

The Task and Finish Group recommend that work on developing a full response to this particular recommendation is paused to allow a plan to be developed to gain a clearer understanding of how this can be embedded across all sectors.

Social Isolation and Loneliness Select Committee Action Plan

Recommendation Ten

KCC should adopt the Government's standard approach to measuring loneliness, which is based on the UCLA Loneliness Scale, and should encourage partner organisations and service providers in Kent to do the same in order to ensure consistency across the county

Response to Recommendation

The task and finish group propose that the wording of the recommendation be changed to 'work with partner organisations.

The task and finish group recommend that rather than adopting the UCLA Loneliness Scale - the Warwick–Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS), currently being used by the Public Health Division, is adopted instead.

Options will be explored to build this into four contracts as a pilot with a view to rolling out across the wider sector.

Options will also be explored to include the use of this scale in the assessment and review process and care and support planning process within Adult Social Care and Health.

Social Isolation and Loneliness Select Committee Action Plan Recommendation Eleven

KCC should set up a panel – which should include KCC Members – to monitor the effectiveness of interventions, promote best practice, and review progress against the objectives of the Loneliness and Social Isolation Strategy.

Response to recommendation

The Chair of the Select Committee is leading on setting up a panel.

Social Isolation and Loneliness Select Committee Action Plan Next Steps

If the Scrutiny Committee endorses the approach set out in this update work of further developing the options will commence.

Any Questions?

