



**Report to Healthier Communities & Adult
Social Care Scrutiny & Policy Development
Committee
Wednesday 28th February 2018**

Report of: South Yorkshire Housing Association on Loneliness and social isolation in people aged 50+

Subject: Age Better in Sheffield (funded by the Big Lottery Fund)

Author of Report: Ruby Smith – Head of Co-design & Improvement (SYHA)

Summary:

In 2016 The Big Lottery Fund awarded £6m to Sheffield to reduce loneliness and social isolation in people aged 50+. SYHA are the lead organisation and have delivered the programme in Sheffield for the past 3 years in partnership with organisations across the city. The programme is at its half way point, with a further 3 years of funding remaining.

The purpose of this report is to:

- Summarise the progress of the programme to date
- Highlight the planned next steps in the programme delivery
- Seek the views of the Scrutiny Committee on the next 3 years of the programme

The reason for this report being presented to Scrutiny Committee is:

- Age Better in Sheffield is a high profile and high priority programme for the city
- The delivery team at SYHA are keen to understand the perspectives of different people across Sheffield to build a picture of how the city wants the programme to develop over the 3 remaining years

Type of item: The report author should tick the appropriate box

| | |
|---|---|
| Reviewing of existing policy | |
| Informing the development of new policy | |
| Statutory consultation | |
| Performance / budget monitoring report | |
| Cabinet request for scrutiny | |
| Full Council request for scrutiny | |
| Call-in of Cabinet decision | |
| Briefing paper for the Scrutiny Committee | |
| Other | ✓ |

The Scrutiny Committee is being asked to:

The Committee is asked to consider the proposals and provide views, comments and recommendations for the next 3 years of the Age Better in Sheffield programme.

Background Papers:

Please see below links to national evidence and information about loneliness and social isolation

<https://www.campaigntoendloneliness.org/about-loneliness/>

https://www.jocoxloneliness.org/pdf/a_call_to_action.pdf

<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/health-wellbeing/loneliness/>

Category of Report: OPEN

Report by South Yorkshire Housing Association

Age Better in Sheffield

1 Introduction/Context

1.1 The following information on loneliness and social isolation is taken from the Jo Cox Commission on Loneliness: a call to action:

1.2 *Loneliness is a subjective, unwelcome feeling of lack or loss of companionship, which happens when we have a mismatch between the quantity and quality of social relationships that we have, and those that we want. It is often associated with social isolation, but people can and do feel lonely even when in a relationship or when surrounded by others.*

1.3 *Studies have found relatively consistent levels of chronic loneliness among older people – with between five and 15 per cent reporting that they are often or always lonely.*

1.4 The following statistics shows the devastating impact directly on people, communities and the

- *Three out of four GPs say they see between 1 and 5 people a day who have come in mainly because they are lonely, and one in ten sees between six and ten such patients daily. (Campaign to End Loneliness)*
- *Weak social connection is as harmful to health as smoking 15 cigarettes a day. (Holt Lunstad)*
- *Loneliness costs UK employers £2.5 billion per year. (Co-op)*
- *Disconnected communities could be costing the UK economy £32 billion every year. (Big Lunch)*

2 Age Better in Sheffield – Overview

2.1 Age Better in Sheffield is governed by the Age Better in Sheffield Core Partnership. The Core Partnership is made up of people from key organisations and institutions in Sheffield (e.g. Sheffield City Council) and by individuals who are aged 50+ and have insight into issues relating to social isolation.

2.2 The Age Better Core Partnership has commissioned a range of services to reduce loneliness and isolation. They include:

- **Wellbeing Practitioners** – This project is delivered by Sheffield Mind. Qualified counsellors work with people who are experiencing isolation to such an extent that they feel unable to leave their home. They provide counselling in the home on a one to one basis to help people overcome psychological barriers to socialising and leaving their home.
- **Peer Mentoring** – This project, delivered by Voluntary Action Sheffield, works with people who are at risk of loneliness and social isolation at key

life events; e.g. bereavement, retirement, ill health. Peer support is provided to prevent loneliness and social isolation

- Start Up – Delivered by Ignite Imaginations, this project supports people to set up groups or activities catering to their own personal interests. For example, an over 60's taekwondo group was set up with support from Ignite Imaginations to find a venue, advertise, find funding etc. The aim of this project is to reach people who feel that current activities are suited to their personality or interests.
- Access Ambassadors – Delivered by SYHA, this project works with people to overcome travel barriers enabling people to fully access their community. Volunteers are trained as Access Ambassadors and they provide 1:1 support to people who are facing travel barriers.

2.3 These are just four examples of services Age Better has provided. The full details of the commissioned activities can be seen on the Age Better in Sheffield website – www.agebettersheff.co.uk

3 Age Better in Sheffield – Outcomes

3.1 Age Better in Sheffield has four main objectives:

- older people are less isolated
- older people are actively involved in their communities with their views and participation valued more highly
- older people are more engaged in the design and delivery of services that help reduce their isolation
- services that help to reduce isolation are better planned, co-ordinated and delivered, and better evidence is available to influence the services that help reduce isolation for older people in the future

3.2 In the past three years the Age Better in Sheffield programme has worked with 1,952 people across Sheffield who are experiencing loneliness and social isolation. 425 volunteers have been involved in delivering the programme of activities to reduce loneliness and social isolation. 46% of people we have worked with have a limiting health condition and 44% have low mental wellbeing.

3.3 The programme has four target wards; Beauchief & Greenhill, Burngreave, Firth Park and Woodhouse. 67% of our activity to date has happened with people who live outside these ward areas.

3.4 Due to the temporary nature of the funding, Age Better support is designed to be a short-term intervention; 60% of people are supported for between 1-6 months.

3.5 All of the services commissioned by Age Better are designed and developed with older people across the city who have experience of social isolation. We are supporting our partners to co-produce their services and have supported them to do this through workshops, training and shared methodology.

4 What does this mean for the people of Sheffield?

- 4.1 We have a further three years of Big Lottery Fund investment in this programme. At this halfway point in the project the Age Better Core Partnership has decided to invest time in refreshing our vision and strategy for the programme and coproducing its next phase.
- 4.2 The current Age Better in Sheffield provision will change. The future provision will be designed in collaboration with organisations and individuals across Sheffield.
- 4.3 SYHA will lead an extensive co-design and research project from February and will co-commission the future Age Better Activity in summer 2018.

5 Questions for the Committee

- 5.1 The committee is asked to review this paper and provide views and comments. In particular we are interested in the committee views on the following questions:
 - A. What citywide initiatives should Age Better in Sheffield connect with in order to achieve greatest reach and impact?**
 - B. From your perspective, what would you be interested to see commissioned in the next phase of Age Better in Sheffield?**
 - C. How would you like to be involved in driving action to reduce loneliness and social isolation in Sheffield?**

Please note, we are asking these questions of hundreds of people across Sheffield and identifying the key themes. Answers provided will be considered alongside the views of many of people and organisations in Sheffield. Decisions made by the Core Partnership will be made using the findings of our consultations and will also be informed by other research and evidence.

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