

LONELINESS AND SOCIAL ISOLATION IN OLDER RESIDENTS - UPDATE

Committee name	Social Care, Housing and Public Health Policy Overview Committee
Officer reporting	John Wheatley - Senior Policy Officer
Papers with report	None
Ward	All

HEADLINES

In 2017/18, the previous Social Services, Housing & Public Health Policy Overview Committee undertook a review into Loneliness and Social Isolation in Older Residents.

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the implementation of the recommendations approved by Cabinet in June 2018.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Committee notes the report.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Recommendation 1

The Committee concludes that Hillingdon Council has a unique and comprehensive strategy to improve the quality of life for Older People, which includes a broad range of activities to help combat loneliness and social isolation.

The Council's Older People's Plan continues to be led by the Leader of the Council as Older People's Champion. Two reports on the Plan are made to Cabinet each year to monitor progress. Quarterly meetings are chaired by the Leader of the Council.

Many of the activities within the Plan directly help with combating loneliness and social isolation, including free swimming, tea and desi dances, Tovertafel installations in libraries, dementia coffee-mornings and film screenings. The Leader's Initiative for Older People continues to provide funding for the popular grants scheme which enables older people's groups to hold events and arrange day trips.

Age UK Hillingdon operates Good Neighbours and befriending services which are targeted at supporting isolated, lonely and vulnerable older people. During 2018/19 387 people received visits at home or were helped to attend activities. The services are provided by 124 volunteers. At the time of the review the Committee was advised that included within the early intervention and prevention scheme within the 2017/19 Better Care Fund plan was a focus on addressing

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social isolation and loneliness amongst older people. The Wellbeing Service provided by the third sector consortium, H4All (Age UK, the Disablement Association Hillingdon (DASH), Harlington Hospice, Hillingdon Carers and Hillingdon Mind), has a key role in supporting older residents identified, primarily through GP practices, as being at greatest risk of hospital admission.

During 2018/19, 421 older residents were referred to the service with loneliness and/or social isolation being identified as the primary reason. The majority of people were supported into social clubs and groups and 50 were provided with more intensive support through the H4All befriending service.

The Committee may wish to note that the work focussed on older people most at risk of admission contributed to a drop in emergency admissions during 2018/19 from 11,267 in 2017/18 to 11,243. This was below the ceiling for 2018/19 of 11,400 admissions.

Recommendation 2

That the Committee support the Council's continued use of and promotion of TeleCare Line and technology to increase independence and reduce isolation of vulnerable people.

The TeleCareLine service supports residents to live safely and independently in their own homes using a range of equipment, such as sensors and detectors all connected back to a control centre to providing assistance to older people when needed, 24/7.

As at 30 June 2019, Hillingdon had 5,698 residents in receipt of Telecare. Of that, 4,872 residents were aged over 75 years. 2,461 older residents were receiving the Level 1 service, which offers a standard package with named responders such as family, friends or neighbours. 2,571 older residents were receiving the Level 2 service which offers the standard package, but with use of the Council's mobile response service.

In Q4 2018/19 the Council recruited to a post that will have responsibility for promoting the use of assistive technology such as telecare to support the independence of residents living in the community. A priority under the 2019/20 BCF plan will be promotion of the preventative benefits of telecare to the emerging eight Neighbourhood Teams.

A Neighbourhood Team is a multi-disciplinary team comprising of staff within a range of GP practices, community health professionals, professionals concerned with the assessment, diagnosis and treatment of adults with urgent medical needs and voluntary and community sector staff.

The main objective of the Neighbourhood Teams is to identify and actively manage the 15% of the population within their neighbourhood at greatest risk of future hospital admission and developing long-term care needs.

Recommendation 3

That the Committee welcomes the support to organisations such as the Bell Farm Christian Centre who undertake varied activities aimed at bringing older people together,

noting that Ward Councillors have also provided support for one-off social activities for older people via the Ward Budget Initiative.

The Council continues to provide support for a wide range of voluntary sector organisations that provide activities aimed at reducing isolation among older people. This includes a programme of core grants, the Leader's Initiative for Older People and the Ward Budgets scheme.

Hillingdon has a number of centres including Bell Farm Christian Centre which offer lunches to older people on a regular basis as well as a range of other activities. The Elm Park and Tudor Clubs in Ruislip Manor and Eastcote and the Dovetail Dining Centre based at Hillingdon Baptist Church and the Northwood Live at Home scheme also offer nutritious lunches 5 days a week enabling older people to mix with others.

The Council provides support for these and other smaller centres through core grants. The Leader's Initiative and Ward Budgets provide ad hoc grants for events, parties and day trips during the summer and for events and lunches at Christmas.

Leader's Initiative for Older People funding has also enabled capital improvements to be made at a number of dining centres in recent years including Bell Farm, Dovetail and Elm Park, together with Ward Budget funding for new chairs and tables.

The Leader's Initiative has also funded the purchase of 'magic tables' in seven Hillingdon libraries. By projecting moving images the tables allow older people with dementia to interact with the images and with each other in a social setting.

Recommendation 4

That the Committee fully backs the work of the Older People's Assembly to raise the profile of the support available to older residents.

The Older People's Assembly meets quarterly with an agenda decided by a representative steering group. The meetings are very well-attended and cover a wide range of topics of interest to older residents. Recent meetings have included presentations and discussions on planning and development, managing changing health needs, extra care, roads and pavements, preparing for winter, Hillingdon4All and keeping active and healthy. The Assembly is also regularly invited to comment on the priorities for the Older People's Plan. In June 2019 the Assembly agreed that the Older People's Plan sets the right priorities to support older people.

Recommendation 5

That the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Social Services, Housing, Health & Wellbeing explore as part of the Older People's Plan, some further initiatives and activities to enable older people to feel valued and engaged in Hillingdon, that may include:

- a. Intergenerational activities with younger people through schools and local education establishments, the Scouts, and Duke of Edinburgh groups***
- b. Reading and life story sessions in libraries***
- c. Singing and music groups in schools***

- d. Promotion of volunteering opportunities**
- e. Spare Chair Scheme**
- f. Animal Therapy session with local organisations**
- g. Further befriending services**
- h. Men in Sheds schemes**
- i. Seated Exercise opportunities**

a. Intergenerational activities with younger people through schools and local education establishments, the Scouts, and Duke of Edinburgh groups

The Council's Universal Young People's Service deliver the Duke of Edinburgh scheme in Hillingdon. Many young people use befriending activities for their volunteering section, including visiting an elderly neighbour, shopping or gardening.

Residential homes would consider participants aged 16 or over.

b. Reading and life story sessions in libraries

Home Library Service - The Home Library Service delivers a service to the most vulnerable and isolated in the community. Library items are delivered to house bound individuals, care homes and sheltered housing schemes every 4 weeks using council vehicles. Currently there are over 360 readers registered with the Home Library Service.

Postal Talking Books Service - a talking book service for registered blind readers. Poetry Read Aloud sessions are lead by library staff and held at day centres, sheltered housing and care homes.

Mobile Library Service - delivers library services to sheltered housing schemes and care homes; over 60's lunch clubs; three day centres; three primary schools (1 special needs school), 11 local nurseries and 25 roadside stops. Currently the Mobile Library has over 1400 registered readers. The mobile library vehicle was replaced in April 2017 with a range of improved features including a step lift for wheelchair users, free wifi on board, and capacity of up to 2500 library items.

Reading Groups - In 17 libraries there are 37 library-run reading groups with a membership of 340 residents: 22% are men; 49% are over the age of 65.

Writing Groups: 4 libraries hold a writing group with a membership of 43 residents: 40% are men; 63% are over the age of 65.

Conversation Groups (including ESOL, debate and discussion etc): In 14 libraries there are 29 conversation groups with a total membership of 246 residents: 27% are men; 66% are over the age of 65.

Sow and Grow: 3 libraries hold Sow and Grow groups with a total membership of 27 residents: 30% are men; 85% are over the age of 65.

c. Singing and music groups in schools (for Older and younger people together)

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Update: None at present. This can be reviewed as part of service plans.

d. Promotion of volunteering opportunities

Hillingdon library service encourages volunteering for young people 14-18, and adults 18+. There are opportunities to apply as a volunteer at any of the 17 branch libraries, the Home Library Service and the Mobile Library Service, depending on the need for support with tasks such as events, storytimes and computer support. There are currently 13 active volunteers in Hillingdon library service.

In addition to this, every year the service recruits young volunteers to help with the Summer Reading Challenge, a scheme that encourages children to maintain their reading level over the summer holidays. Volunteers talk to children about the books they've been reading, give out the challenge incentives and update the records.

Culture Bite is the library service's annual arts and culture programme, and in 2018 a volunteer profile was developed to assist. Seven new volunteers were taken on to help out at a range of events across the borough, in libraries, theatres and other venues.

e. Spare Chair Scheme

This national initiative seeks to provide opportunities for Older People to be invited for dinner or lunch usually by neighbours, i.e. Open Door Sundays. It is hoped to consider this in Hillingdon during 2019/20.

f. Animal Therapy session with local organisations

It is hoped to consider this in Hillingdon during 2019/20.

g. Further befriending services

As well as the Age UK Hillingdon befriending services cited at 1, the Council has also supported H4All to provide a new dementia befriending scheme to work alongside its existing wellbeing service and other initiatives such as social prescribing. The service is aligned to the Hillingdon Dementia Alliance and is recruiting volunteers and training them up to be able to support people with dementia to maintain their skills and confidence.

h. Hillingdon Men's Sheds

Men's Shed schemes have been set up in the following locations specifically to address social isolation among men.

Rural Activity Garden Centre (RAGC, Hayes)

- The 'shed' is running successfully with 5 participants (maximum capacity) at RAGC.

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Activities are mainly woodcraft based.

- The main reason given by men joining is that they want to get out of the house and do something; the majority are retired people.

Harefield Library

- The 'shed' was running with 2 participants but now looking to refresh the project to try to attract more men. One possibility is through setting up walking football as an activity to get men engaged (the social benefits of this activity are well documented.)

Bell Farm Christian Centre (West Drayton)

- In discussion with Bell Farm to set up a 'shed' as a regular activity within their day centre programme for older residents.

i. Seated Exercise Programme (MOVES)

There are 20 sessions held weekly in 12 libraries and 2 community venues. There is a £2 charge per person and the sessions are held for residents over the age of 65. Due to the popularity of the classes, a number of the sessions are now held back-to-back in libraries.

Feedback:

- Hayes End Library: one group has formed long lasting friendships amongst each other. After the session the library staff have set up the coffee area (within the library) for the participants to carry on chatting
- A male resident recently had heart surgery and a few weeks later was back attending the session. His nurse observed the session and noticed how happy and active the individual was.
- A female resident had suffered a stroke a few years ago. She gave feedback that attending the session helped her mobility and she feels less stiff during the week.

Recommendation 6

That the Cabinet request officers review existing events to better incentivise attendance from male residents, based upon the initial data and feedback received by the Committee

Walks

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Long established programme that continues to attract new walkers every year. Since April 2018, 30% of new participants are male.

Outdoor Gyms

Free instructor led programme that aims to give residents the confidence to use outdoor gym equipment in local parks, independently. The sessions started in October 2018 and there are now a set regular programme in 13 locations that will enable participants to benefit from the social benefits of exercising in a group.

40% male participation (of over 100 attendances).

Coffee Mornings

Dementia Friends Coffee Mornings have been set up in 7 libraries for people living with dementia and their carers. The sessions are free and offer information about local services and provide activities (delivered by instructors) specially designed to engage people living with dementia. These coffee mornings offer a regular space and variety of activities for individuals who would otherwise be isolated and potentially lead to the deterioration of their physical and mental wellbeing.

Northwood library: Held weekly, Hillingdon's first Young Onset Group (for people living with dementia below the age of 65) is going well. In the 5 months since starting there are seven regular participants, of which two are men. Both men are carers. We also have a male volunteer who was previously a carer.

South Ruislip Library: The Dementia Coffee morning at South Ruislip Library is fairly new (started on 29 April) and is held fortnightly; the sessions alternate between art and reminiscence activities. On average 2-3 people attend each session (1 man); feedback has been positive in that people have enjoyed doing the art. There have been positive comments from general library users who have been impressed that the library offer this type of event.

Yiewsley Library: Held monthly, the Dementia Coffee Morning has an average attendance of four residents of which one is male. The group participants particularly enjoy singing, even if they are the same songs from session to session, as well as the Active Mind Resources (a suite of games and activities designed specifically for people living with dementia).

Botwell Library: The weekly Dementia Coffee Morning has around 15-16 residents, of which 5 are male. The timetable offers singing, exercising and reminiscence activities - a perfect balance for the participants. Observations show that male attendees like singing and games and the females like a variety of activities, e.g. art & craft, singing and games etc.

Ruislip Manor Library: The average attendance of the coffee mornings are around 12-19 residents each week; around 7 or 8 are males.

There has been a lot of positive feedback and residents report enjoying the variety of sessions such as Tovertafel, reminiscence, seated exercise and art as well as using the Active Minds resources such as jigsaws and conversation cards.

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Dances

There are 5 monthly dances across the Borough: Tea Dances at the Middlesex Suite, Yiewsley and West Drayton Community Centre; Winston Church Hillingdon. Line dance at Yiewsley and West Drayton Community Centre; and a Bollywood style dance at the Botwell Leisure Centre. All the dances are free of charge for residents over the age of 65.

Feedback: Monthly tea dances are very popular: friendships developed and social engagements arranged outside of the dances.

Men feel confident to attend on their own and a number have formed friendships from attending regularly. The feedback is very positive and residents keenly keep the monthly commitment to attend, including changing medical appointments to attend the dance.

A quarter of the participants at the Desi dance are men who engage happily. All the participants are from BME groups and also commit to the monthly dance.

Implications on related Council policies

A role of the Policy Overview Committees is to make recommendations on service changes and improvements to the Cabinet who are responsible for the Council's policy and direction.

Financial Implications

None at this stage.

Legal Implications

None at this stage.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Review By The 2017/18 Social Services, Housing & Public Health Policy Overview Committee:
Loneliness And Social Isolation In Older Residents