



East Suffolk Community Partnership Board

Monday 16th March 2020

Social Isolation and Loneliness in East Suffolk

Background

A significant amount of work has already been undertaken on Social isolation in East Suffolk, including the ground-breaking hidden needs mapping and associated Hidden Needs Grant Programme, which has to date enabled eight innovative community projects to tackle social isolation and loneliness (amongst older people or families with limited resources) in the hidden need 'hot spots' identified through the mapping. These projects are:

1. Everyday ActivEast in Leiston, Felixstowe and Woodbridge
2. English Touring Opera 'Turtle Song' project for people with dementia and their carers
3. Thursday's at the Fisher - dementia friendly screenings at the Fisher Theatre in Bungay
4. Compassionate Companions end of life project on the Deben Peninsular
5. New Age UK Chinwags groups in Aldeburgh, Beccles, Wickham Market and Woodbridge
6. A new minibus for the Rose and Sweet William Club in Leiston
7. Relocation of the Beccles Men's Shed to a new home in the town
8. A School Volunteering programme at Melton Primary School

The programme was overseen by a multi-agency grant panel, which included the Suffolk Community Foundation (from whom the Suffolk Hidden Needs report originated), Community Action Suffolk, Suffolk County Council and East Suffolk Council. The difference between this programme and other grant schemes in the area was that each project had to have been supported by their respective Communities Officer, CAS Officer or SCC Building Community Capacity Officer and had to target a 'hot spot' area identified through the data pack.

Community Partnerships

As outlined in Report ES/0338, six of the eight Community Partnership workshops identified **Social Isolation & Loneliness** in their top three priorities, it was top overall in terms of combined number of votes and was also a clear priority at the East Suffolk Partnership Forum workshop in November 2019. Appendix A shows an overview of the notes from across the workshops, indicating potential priority groups and solutions.

There is a huge amount of work already going on to tackle Social Isolation and Loneliness in East Suffolk, including initiatives such as Good Neighbour Schemes (led by Community Action Suffolk), Meet Up Mondays (led by the Rural Coffee Caravan and Community Action Suffolk), Men's Sheds, Intergenerational activities and events, Talking Benches and many more. However, the Community Partnership workshops clearly indicated that there is more to be done.

Progress Update since the Community Partnership Workshops

Suffolk County Council Knowledge Team has been busy updating the Hidden Needs maps produced two years ago, but with a wider focus on all age groups (young people, working age and older people) and including a range of different factors that might contribute to Social Isolation and Loneliness.

This mapping will be presented at the March Community Partnership Board meeting.

It is proposed to re-form the Hidden Needs Steering Group to oversee activity around the Social Isolation and Loneliness priority on behalf of the CPB, to include Suffolk Community Foundation, Community Action Suffolk, Suffolk County Council, East Suffolk Council and any other partners who wish to be involved.

Funding Proposals

1 Relaunch Hidden Needs Grants Programme

It is proposed to expand and relaunch the Hidden Needs grant programme (which currently focusses on older people and families with limited access to resources), based upon the updated mapping and the priority groups/areas identified for 2020.

There is £40,264 remaining in the pot and a further £20,000 has been made available through the final funding allocation from the East Suffolk Partnership giving a total (as of end February 2020) of £60,264.

It is therefore proposed to contribute a further £40,000 from the CPB budget to take the amount of funding available to **over £100,000**. The upper grant limit for applications would be £10,000.

The Programme would be overseen by the Steering Group (outlined above) who would act as the Grants Panel, supported by the Funding Team at East Suffolk Council.

2. New Small Grants Fund

In addition, it is proposed to offer small grants in each Community Partnership area by providing a ringfenced pot of £2,500 per Community Partnership (i.e. a total of **£20,000 across the eight areas**) for start-up grants of up to £500 per project to kick-start small scale projects to reduce Social Isolation and Loneliness

These could include, but would not be limited to, the following:

- Good Neighbour Schemes
- Meet Up Mondays
- Talking/Listening Benches
- Men's Sheds
- Intergenerational Events
- ...and many more locally led ideas

The process of applying for these grants would be simpler and decision making quicker than the main fund. It is proposed that someone from each Community Partnership be involved in a virtual Panel to enable local input into the decision-making process.

It is therefore proposed to allocate a total of **£60,000** from the 2019/20 Community Partnership Board budget for the two Hidden Needs Grants programmes to ensure that we continue to support the wide range of community and VCSE-led initiatives that we know are making a difference in East Suffolk.

3. Rural Needs

It is clear that rural needs are a priority for all the Community Partnerships, even where the majority of the population live in more urban areas/towns. During the first round of Community Partnership meetings, access to services, employment and training opportunities and leisure/social activities was an obvious priority for communities, Town and Parish Councils, and the organisations working with them, in East Suffolk.

It is therefore proposed that we work through Community Action Suffolk to do further work around identifying the most rurally isolated/remote communities in East Suffolk that are also social isolation hot spots and undertake pro-active work to stimulate community activity focussed around a community 'hub' (village hall, community centre, church building etc.).

The aim of this would be to use existing assets to their full potential in terms of meeting the needs of the whole community and maximising the opportunities for social connectivity. The allocation could include some funding to enable new activities, for example sports equipment for a wellbeing hub, toys for a mother and toddler group or an urn and crockery for an intergenerational tea dance.

Community Action Suffolk are also keen to 'rural proof' the work of the eight Community Partnerships to ensure that funding is benefitting more remote rural communities. It is proposed that £15,000 of the 2019/20 budget be allocated for the above projects specifically targeting more rural communities in each Community Partnership area.

Nicole Rickard / Chris Abraham

East Suffolk Council / Community Action Suffolk

March 2020

Appendix 1

Community Partnership Workshop Notes - Social Isolation

Who?

- All ages x 2
- Young People
- Children
- Adults 45+
- Adults 65+
- Older Adults x 14
- Hidden needs for older people - need services, facilities and company
- Housebound
- Those with vulnerabilities
- People with depression
- People with dementia
- Those living in deprivation
- Widows
- Rural areas/living in villages x 5
- Young people who do not drive
- Young people impacted by social media
- Unemployed

Solutions...

- Friendship / Chat benches x 2
- Community lunches
- Volunteer schemes e.g. befriending schemes, home visits
- 'Street champions'
- Community hubs/spaces – health and wellbeing/social connections x 4
- Men's Sheds
- Improve community spaces for social interactions
- Community groups addressing isolation
- Meet Up Mondays
- Good Neighbour Schemes
- Social facilities for older people
- Improve reach of initiatives to ensure get to older people
- Intergenerational interaction opportunities x 3 and learning
- IT projects/training
- Mobile outreach services for rural areas
- Help people to move around to access services/ensure transport links people together x 2
- Encourage communication x 2
- Use of social media
- Community engagement x 2

Additional Context

- Need more information about different ages and why they are socially isolated
- Links to mental health and long-term health conditions – physical and emotional impact
- More likely to be victims of scams – vulnerable lonely people need protecting
- Linked to feeling valued
- Encourage more families into specific areas by providing more for them
- Opportunities for engagement and the work of VCS and community groups in the area
- Visibility of safe areas for people within towns