

## **Staffordshire Health and Wellbeing Board – 01 December 2022**

### **Staffordshire's Loneliness and Social Isolation Reduction Plan**

#### **Recommendations**

The Board is asked to:

- a. Approve the development of a Loneliness and Social Isolation Reduction Plan and ask that all partners contribute.
- b. Receive future reports on the progress of the Plan.

#### **Background**

1. The Staffordshire Health & Well-being Strategy (2022-27) includes Healthy Ageing as one of four priorities. The Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Integrated Care System has recognised the importance of ageing well and produced a Healthy Ageing & Managing Frailty in Older Age Strategy (2021).
2. Both Strategies identify loneliness and social isolation as a significant and preventable cause of poor health, especially in older age. Development of a Loneliness and Social Isolation Reduction Plan will support delivery of both strategies.

#### **Loneliness and Social Isolation**

3. Loneliness can be defined as a subjective, unwelcome feeling of lack or loss of companionship. It happens when we have a mismatch between the quantity and quality of social relationships that we want and those that we have. Social Isolation is an objective state whereby the number of social contacts a person has is reduced.
4. Loneliness and social isolation are a public health priority. Some of the key impacts are:
  - a. Increased risk of developing coronary heart disease and having a stroke.
  - b. Increased risk of depression and suicide.
  - c. Increased risk of cognitive decline and dementia.
  - d. Increased risk of requiring long term care: individuals that are socially isolated are 3.5 times more likely to enter residential care.
  - e. Increased overall risk of death - by around 25%.

5. Reducing loneliness and social isolation improves quality of life for people and reduces costs for the NHS and social care.
6. Self-reported surveys (Public Health Outcomes Framework) show that over 20% of adults living in Staffordshire report feeling lonely often or some of the time, similar to UK average. East Staffordshire and Cannock Chase have the highest reported prevalence of loneliness among districts and Lichfield has the lowest. The Covid pandemic increased loneliness with people already lonely likely to get lonelier.

### **Our ambition**

7. Our ambition is to make Staffordshire a place where people of all ages feel connected and reduce the prevalence and impact of loneliness and social isolation.
8. We want to reduce levels of self-reported loneliness and social isolation by 25% for those in the highest risk groups and help 75% of these people understand how to stay connected.
9. Action is already underway:
  - a. The Supportive Communities programme has mapped assets in local communities and promoted them on Staffordshire Connects, developed 25 Community Help points across the county, and now has 139 Community Champions.
  - b. Investment in Support Staffordshire to build additional community capacity where needed, volunteer buddying programmes and training to frontline practitioners.
  - c. Campaigns such as Let us Beat Loneliness Together and Talk Suicide.
  - d. NHS Charities Together in Staffordshire has funded fourteen loneliness and isolation projects across the county.
10. However, there is more to do to. We want to collaborate with individuals, teams and organisations in Staffordshire develop a comprehensive Loneliness and Social Isolation Reduction Plan that builds on national guidance and best practice, local intelligence, and local views.
11. The Plan will include:
  - a. Raising awareness about loneliness and social isolation and its impact in our communities.
  - b. **Foundation Services.** Using existing services to reach people at risk, for example NHS, social care, and housing services.
  - c. **Direct Interventions.** Maintaining and enabling social connections through interventions such as group activities and befriending services.

- d. **Gateway Services.** Helping to keep people connected, including through technology and planning.
- e. **Structural Enablers.** Creating the conditions for social connection, including asset-based community development and positive ageing.

### **List of Background Documents/Appendices:**

A copy of the Draft Loneliness and Social Isolation Strategy Summary Presentation (2022 – 2027) is available on request.

### **Contact Details**

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