Working together to address loneliness

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Best of Times and the Worst of Times ……..

- **The Worst**
  Austerity: public services at full stretch and many being cut back
  .
  Local Government and Voluntary sector especially vulnerable, but health also struggline in many areas.

- **The Best**
  Massive public response to Age UK's No-one should have No-one Campaign 2015 and 2016

  Lots going on, and a real will from all sides to work together to make a difference

Why important?

- 1.2 million older people are very unhappy.

- Unable to contribute to their community

- Association with higher incidence of strokes and heart disease, falls, depression and dementia, suicide

- Role of stress hormones

- Healthy and unhealthy behaviours

- Increased demand on health and care services

Key Principles

- Embedding solutions to loneliness in the wider community more effective than a stand-alone loneliness service

- NHS, Local Government, Public Health, Voluntary Sector, Businesses all have a role to payl: whole more than the sum of the parts: loneliness is a well being and active community issue as well as a health issue

- Take a whole person, person-centred, coproduction approach

- Addressing prevention and early intervention as well as chronic loneliness identifies opportunities and solutions

- Too narrow an approach will compromise effectiveness

- And now is a golden moment for mobilising people across the community

Growing public awareness nationally

- Response to Age UK's No-one should have No-one Christmas Campaign
  - 17,000 peak in enquires in 2016/17 compared with 7,000 enquiries in 2015/16 and no peak before
  - 43,000 annual enquires about volunteering compared with 20,000 in 2015/16 and 8,000 in 2014/15

- Jo Cox Commission on Loneliness
  - Turbo charge public action on loneliness
  - Life Course: showcases through 2017
  - Loneliness discussed at length in parliament
  - MPs have visited local services and become aware of how can help constituents
  - Joining with Eden Project lead to **9.3 million people** getting involved in the Big Lunch

And growing mobilisation locally: for example

- Barnsley Age UK recruiting 'eyes on the ground' – overwhelming response – similar feedback from others

- British Red Cross recruiting volunteers in London: oversubscribed in two weeks

- Co-op and British Red Cross: intergenerational - 40 sites

- Ageing Better programme – in Bristol more than 250 local organisations signed up

Local government plays a crucial part

Cllr Izzie Secombe, Chair of LGA Community Well Being Board, Combatting Loneliness LGA, Age UK and Campaign to End Loneliness

"Even at times of such austerity it should be possible to resource the required actions through some redirection and reprioritisation, and through galvanising capacity within local communities."
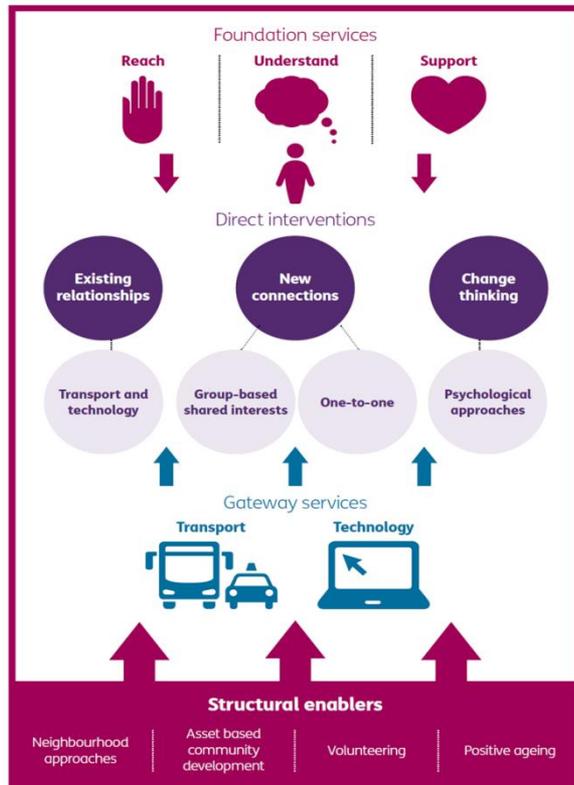
Examples of Leeds and Rochdale

- Presentations at a conference last week

- Loneliness being addressed as part of an asset based approached to communities.

  Joint working with NHS, Public Health, Community Networks, Voluntary Sector and Businesses

Shared framework: Age UK, Campaign to End Loneliness and Local Government Association

Foundation services

Direct Interventions

Gateway Services

Structured Interventions

Age UK current programmes to address loneliness

- More than 120 local Age UKs provide social activities which help prevent or counteract loneliness, and/or with specific befriending services.

- Other services – information and advice on care and benefits, repairs, shops etc can help identify people who are lonely as well as practical help

- Call in Time – national befriending call services

- Nationally 'No-one should have no-one' – mobilising public awareness and opportunities to volunteer and 'Call in Time'

- Raising awareness of what works: with the Campaign and with the Local Government Association

- Test and Learn pilots with local Age UKs

Testing Promising Approaches to Reducing Loneliness

- Exploring foundation services

- Reach
  How find older people experiencing loneliness?

- Understand
  Why is the individual lonely? What kind of intervention or activity would help them help themselves?

- Support
  Working together to reconnect

And it worked!

- More than 70% of people who said they were lonely sometimes or frequently reduced their loneliness scores.

- Nearly 90% of people who were frequently lonely reduced their scores

Reach: Eyes on the ground

- Loneliness embedded in other services: across all local Age UK services: trained to recognise signs and to ask. Energised the local Age UKs

- Existing networks: eg social care workforce, other voluntary sector organisations, home from hospital services, GPs receptionists, district nurses

- Other public sector professionals: Police Community Support Officers, Fire and Rescue

- Employers: employees and front line staff – the co-op, tescos

- Local shops and services: hairdressers, cafes, shops, pubs, parks, libraries, post offices, plumbers, electricians.

- Faith networks

- Local MPs and councillors: within their surgeries and wards, and invited to events

- Local campaigns and activities: Neighbours, relatives, friends – Happy to chat! Street Parties. Pop up events – armchair aerobics

Community mobilisation: Range of Roles

- Let people know about services

- Permission to refer to services

- Engage, listen, and learn

- Support to reconnect

Reach: Loneliness Heat Maps

- Research tool to measure and map risk of loneliness among older people in local community

- Based on analysis of the English Longitudinal Study of Ageing and developed with the Office for National Statistics

- Most important risk factors include:

    o poor health

    o household size / living alone

    o marital status / being widowed, divorced

www.ageuk.org.uk/professional-resources-home/research/loneliness-maps/

Loneliness Heat Maps - Wirral
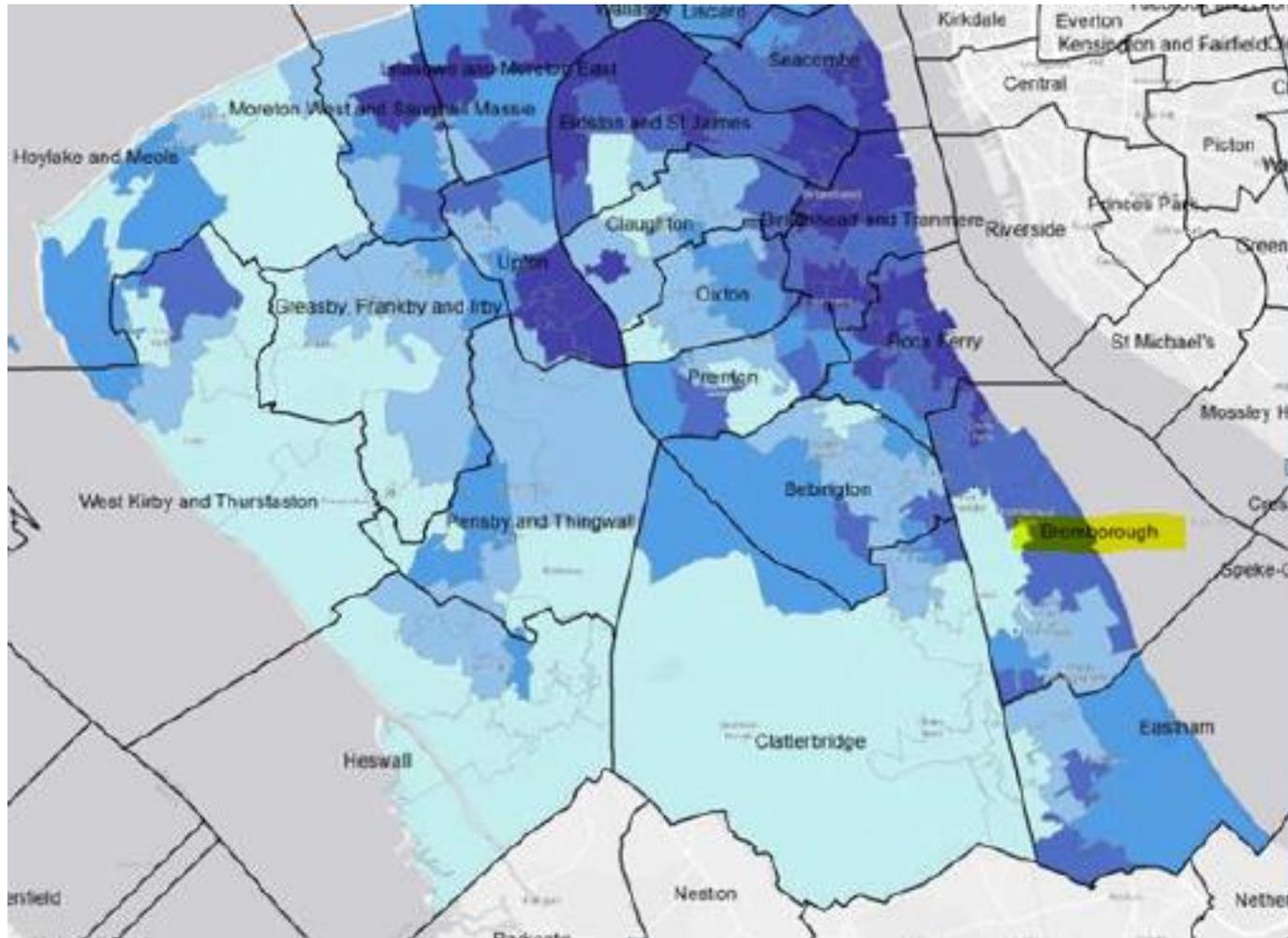
And in areas of high risk ……..

- Share with partners

- Identify existing services and activities

- Pilot new ones - Wirral

- Big Door Knock - Wirral

Understand
Guided Conversation

- Person centred: helping individual find their own solutions

- Strength based

- Emphasis on working with, not doing to, or for.

- Build confidence and skills to ask directly about loneliness – fear of upsetting people, whilst the upset is already there

Support

- Telephone calls can provide bridging service

- Matching with volunteer

- Visits to home – 'befriending'

- Identifying what would help and then helping to access: eg Accompanying on public transport; going together to lunch club, book club, introducing to people with similar interests; internet etc

- Also other services, like Benefits and Handyperson may also help 'break the mood' and energise. Transport may be key element

- Sensitivity to adapt service over time

- Flexible guidance on how long: contextual judgement on 'dependency'

Evaluate

- UCLA three item questions:

  - How often do you feel you lack companionship
  - How often do you feel isolated from others
  - How often do you feel left out

- Score from 3 (Hardly Ever) to 9 (often)

- Asked at Guided Conversation

- Asked again 6 to 12 weeks after intervention started

Some elephant traps to avoid

Narrow focus can have unintended consequences

•Not lonely enough?

- Investment in reach?
- Turning away people who self refer?
- Prevention and mobilisation

•Exclude if in receipt of social care? Issue is whether lonely. Consequences the same

•Payment by net impact on loneliness? Responsible for things outside control?

•Whole service criteria for success: how has the service helped? What has the individual gone on to do? Measures of growth in community capacity?