

## AGENDA ITEM

### REPORT TO HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

17 OCTOBER 2019

### REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH

## ANNUAL PUBLIC HEALTH REPORT 2018 – 2019 “*LONELY? GET CONNECTED*”

### SUMMARY

The Director of Public Health has a statutory duty to write an annual independent report on the health and wellbeing of the local population. This year’s Annual Public Health Report is focused on the important public health issue of loneliness and is titled “*Lonely? Get Connected*”. Connectivity and kind communities are identified as important components in addressing loneliness.

The report begins by providing a high level summary of the health and wellbeing of Stockton-on-Tees residents with a particular focus on health inequalities. The report then takes a close look at the issue of loneliness in the Borough. It is estimated around 7,500 people in the Borough may be experiencing loneliness which can have a serious impact on their physical and mental health. An important message is that it not just the elderly that are affected – it affects people right across the lifecourse.. The report highlights there are key groups that are more at risk and also identifies factors which can trigger vulnerability to loneliness such as bereavement. These factors are mapped onto local wards to identify potential ‘hotspots’ of loneliness in the Borough to help support targeting of local interventions and services to address loneliness.

Loneliness should not be confused with social isolation, although they are related concepts. The report defines loneliness as a complex and unpleasant emotional response which can be chronic and long term. It occurs when there is a mismatch between the quality of social interactions we want and need, to the ones we actually have. Social isolation is an objective measure of the number of social contacts people have.

The report also provides 11 case studies of initiatives taking place across Stockton-on-Tees to address loneliness. The case studies published are wide ranging in order to showcase the different interventions in place and how everyone has a role, ranging from the individual, community, to wider environmental approaches such as “Our Spaces”.

The report puts forward a number of recommendations:

- The Health and Wellbeing Board to support the development of a whole system approach to addressing loneliness and ensure there are a range of interventions which:
  - address the needs of particular at risk groups such as young carers
  - prepares and supports individuals during life changing events and transitions where they might be most vulnerable to loneliness.
- The Health and Wellbeing Board to support the production of a loneliness Joint Strategic Needs Assessment to further inform local understanding of the nature of the problem and who is most at risk from loneliness across Stockton-on-Tees.
- Local services/interventions that aim to reduce loneliness should evaluate the effectiveness of their approaches and help build the local evidence base on what works
- All key partners to contribute to the ongoing mapping of local community assets (community directory) and ensure these are widely publicised, addressing gaps that are identified.
- Key partners such as the Clinical Commissioning Group to ensure that solutions such as social prescribing services are focussed on quality of social interactions.

- All partners to explore the potential to included specific outcomes to address loneliness into place based working as an opportunity to scale up work.
- Partners that are responsible for designing urban infrastructure and spatial planning should consider how their designs can best facilitate social connectivity.
- All partners to explore more ways to promote the Five Ways to Welbeing
- Partners to invest in programmes that encourage kinder communities so it is part of everyday culture.

The report concludes with a summary of activities that have been implemented in line with the last APHRs recommendations.

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

The Health and Wellbeing Board is asked to endorse the Report and consider how to take forward the recommendations contained within the report.

**Name of Contact Officer: Katie Needham**  
**Post Title: Interim Director of Public Health**  
**Telephone No. 01642 527054**  
**Email Address: [katie.needham@stockton.gov.uk](mailto:katie.needham@stockton.gov.uk)**