

## Summary report - Connectedness event 'Sunderland coming together'

### Purpose

The purpose of this report is to evaluate the multi-partnership approach to tackling social isolation and loneliness event. In 2016/17 local Sunderland research was undertaken in partnership with Sunderland University and local people in relation to social isolation and loneliness, the published findings instigated key partners across the city to come together to explore how collaborative working might address some of the issues identified in the research. The themed event was based on 5 ways for wellbeing (Appendix 1).

### Aim:

To begin to develop a city approach to tackling social isolation and loneliness

### Objectives:

- Share the findings of the research with wider partners and the community.
- Multi-partnership approach to tackling social isolation and loneliness, using the assets we have in the community
- Intergenerational event - Connecting students with people who are ageing well and vice versa (picture below shows student and older local man)
- Connecting community organisations with statutory services and vice versa
- To build memento on tackling this topic as a whole system across the city
- Volunteer opportunities for students and older people, building community capacity



### Collaboration

Public health along with Sunderland University Student Union facilitated discussions about joint event around this topic. Social isolation and loneliness is a key topic within the public health 'Ageing Well' agenda but also a strategic priority for the student union in terms of young people. Social isolation and loneliness is often seen as an ageing issue therefore the event focused on connectedness rather than loneliness and isolation. The Sunderland wellbeing network recruited partners to get involved and to contribute to planning, designing the agenda (Appendix 2) and funding the event.

Planning group Partners - Sunderland Student Union, Sunderland Council Public Health and Sunderland Library Services, Sunderland Carers Centre, Washington Mind, Sunderland and Durham Society for the Blind, Anchor Hanover (sheltered accommodation) and Sunderland

Older Peoples Council (SOPC). There was also other organisation's that held stands (see Appendix 3) which was a mixture of organisations for volunteering opportunities for students and for people ageing well. (picture below shows local older man engaging with Anchor Hanover)



### **Connectedness event**

The event had 72 people register attendance and 48 people completed the evaluation form, overall the event was very successful. 100% felt that the length of the event was right and participates asked for more of these events twice a year. We were particularly interested in whether people in attendance would be interested in becoming an 'Connecting champion' and 62% said that they would. It was also an opportunity to strengthen the Sunderland wellbeing network and recruit more members and 64% of people said they would like to join the network. We asked about future events and any further comments, and we have lots of suggestions and comments to take forward, some of the key themes are about opportunities to connect with different people and people really valued the networking. The event had a mixture of interactions including people sharing their personal stories, a video and, we held a networking section of the agenda for people to talk with someone they didn't know. We participated in singing a folk song which was uplifting and great for improving your wellbeing which was facilitated by student union (picture below)



The aim of this event was to connect a diverse group of people around the event theme including mental health, disabilities, homeless, BME and further connecting of students. Thinking about inclusiveness for everyone e.g.; visually impaired or people who are deaf was a theme which evolved from the event

We gave all attendees a heart pledge (Valentines week) to make their individual or organisational pledge to support this topic which is a system wide approach. We also gave

examples on the tables (picture below) this was an excellent tool to get personal pledges from local people and organisational pledge (see pg. 7)



## Conclusion

The event has shown to be a success and we need to carry on building on what we achieved through holding the event. We need to create opportunities for people to connect. We need to continue to engage with partners and build on the assets within our communities and keep isolation, loneliness, wellbeing on everyone's agenda.

## Next steps

- Develop a connecting champion role with local partners
- Connect refugees and asylum seekers with an established 'Ageing well group'
- Continue to recruit NEW members for the Sunderland wellbeing network
- Develop the concept with place-based services about volunteering with asylum seekers and young homeless people on an environmental project
- Build on community assets to support social isolation and loneliness
- Develop a collage with the drawings from participants on 5 ways for wellbeing and being connected
- Look at future event bringing two different groups of people together
- Feedback this report to SMT for any comments before drafting an action plan

This summary evaluation has been collated by Jackie Nixon Public Health Practitioner (Ageing Well) Sunderland City Council on behalf of the multiagency partnership.

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## **Event themed round the 5 ways for wellbeing**

**Connect** – we have ensured there are plenty opportunities throughout the day to network and connect with everyone in the event today

**Be Active** – the venue was chosen due to its accessibility and opportunities to use public transport or walk to the venue and we would encourage people after lunch to have another walk

**Take notice** – we are grateful to all our presenters who have taken time out to present and share their experiences with you and we would ask delegates to take full advantage of the opportunity to listen and learn about all the fantastic work we have going on in Sunderland. We will have a session on singing. We hope you can take the opportunity to engage and enjoy the music and take part if you want too.

**Keep learning** – we hope the information you receive today will be of benefit to yourself and your community and learn something new.

**Give** – we have planned to provide some much-needed items to a local food bank and would kindly ask all delegates to bring an item. We will have a designated area near registration to collect these. The food banks are need of the following items: fruit juice, tinned fruit, tinned rice pudding & custard and tinned fish. They would also appreciate tea bags, sugar and UHT milk. Toiletries are also welcome men's deodorant and toilet roll.

**Please help if you can**

**'Bringing Sunderland Together'**

**Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> February 2019**

**Agenda**

- 10.00**      **Opening speech and welcome.**  
Mandi Purvis – President of wellbeing
- 10.10**      **Community research**  
Ms Jackie Nixon - Public Health Practitioner (Ageing well)  
Dr Stephen MacDonald - University of Sunderland
- 10.25**      **Questions**
- 10.30**      **This is me**  
**Students** Laura Hubbard, Bryan Pepple, Adam O'Wellen  
**Ageing well** Liz Highmore, John Lloyd, Val Armstrong
- 10.45**      **This is us**  
Libraries Service - Craig Smith  
Sunderland Carers Centre - Chris Ranson  
Washington Mind - Jacqui Reeves  
Sunderland & Durham Royal Society for the Blind - Richard Wood  
Anchor Hanover – John Oxborough  
Sunderland Student's Union – Nicki Edwards
- 11.15**      **Connecting activity - an opportunity for everyone to connect**
- 11.40**      **Uplifting activity** – led by Lydia Hayman
- 11.50**      **We are you.**  
Youth Focus North East video – introduced by Steve Watson
- 12.00**      **Interactive activity** – facilitated by Washington Mind
- 12.30**      **Closing remarks** Gillian Gibson – Director of Public health
- 12.45**      **Evaluation – making it work** – facilitated by Jackie Nixon

## Appendix 3

### Connectedness Event - Bringing Sunderland Together 13/2/19 Total attendance 72 people Evaluation total: 48

#### Organisations with stands

1. Tyne and Wear Fire service – Safe and well checks
2. Live Life well – Health champions programme
3. Student Union
4. Washington mind
5. Sunderland and Durham Blind Society
6. Sunderland Carers Centre
7. Sunderland Pride
8. Sunderland Library service
9. Youth Focus Northeast
10. Sunderland University
11. Anchor Hanover
12. Forget-me-not CIC
13. More than Grandparents

1) How often would you like to see these types of events take place?

- Once a year  **17%**  
 Twice a year  **36%**  
 Three times a year **21%**  
 More than 3 time a year  **27%**

2) On a rating of 1-5, 1 being very poor and 5 being very good, how would you rate the following aspects of the event: -

Event aspect	Very Poor to Very Good				
	1	2	3	4	5
Communication before event	2%	2%	10%	29%	55%
Welcome and registration			8%	21%	70%
Venue and facilities ( <b>except parking</b> )			2%	17%	78%
Catering and Refreshments				23%	72%
Information Stalls				27%	70%
Guest speakers				12%	87%
Video <b>audio description</b>		4%	2%	12%	80%
Interactive activities <b>Not very inclusive</b>		4%	2%	23%	68%
Heart pledge <b>Not very inclusive</b>		4%	6%	19%	63%

3) How would you rate the length of the session?

- Too short**  **Just right**  **100%** **Too long**

4) Would you like to know more about being becoming a Connecting Champion?

Yes  61% No  29%

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5) Would you like to be added to our city-wide engagement network for future communication?

Yes  62% No  14%

6) What could the future Connectedness events do to make you **personally** interested in attending future events?

Volunteering across different sectors of the community

I'm already interested

Loved the opportunity to share and meet new people

More time to networking, wider range of services

I think what has been shown and discussed today has covered all situation, most informative

Everything was perfect keep it this way

More student engagement

Try for more student engagement

Special need children (to be there for their carers)

Talk to older people spend some time with them

Keeping a mix of services/charities/guest speakers

Make it more inclusive visually

Moving from discussion to practical actions

Similar format and subject

Make it more inclusive visually/hearing loss

I liked the themes – loneliness/isolation was a great choice and the title 'connectedness' means it has longevity

More user involvement – more discussion and question sessions

Recovery involved next time to showcase the work they do

More and various groups

More presentations from local groups

More research around issues in kinship care both for adult and child

Signposting to learning i.e. didn't know about U3A till today

Anything that connects organisations to one another and raises awareness

More discussion about how we can work together as different organisations. Input from 'homeliness' organisations

People could have introduced themselves in the room at the beginning who they are and where they were from

7) Are there any other comments you would like to make about today's event or suggestions for future events?

Felt a little rushed at times, It was great well done everybody, It was fab 😊, Not really Presenters were amazing. Fab event went well, Great job stalls were well presented well done planning group!! It has been a great event, well ran and organised, good range of stalls and fantastic networking opportunity – well done. Great ideas look forward to seeing what people do following the event 😊 Just to say thank you. Though provoking – build on it Inclusiveness - deaf/deafness engaging the deaf community in future events

Invite youth offending team

This was very well organised and had a great balance of practical, interactive and theoretical background. More exploration of safe spaces in the city. Excellent, Very emotive programme

Less singing. It was excellent

Excellent bringing local people together perfect networking opportunity. Enjoyed meeting people of all different interests, interesting to see how things are being studied

Offering encouragement and hope. A very good idea – more of the same please

Lack of parking an issue. Excellent bringing local people together perfect networking opportunity

Team building, mix tables up, have speed dating type activity of getting to know each other, making connections easier and learning about other people. Help people who are shy/nervous on their own

## **Love hearts pledge**

### **Personal**

Be kind and forgiving

Talking to people I don't know and finding out about their journey

Connect with other residents at father's assisted living facility

Visit family and help students interact

To visit my mum more. Help my sister

To volunteer and help people when I can

Be more involved in community-based actions

Talk to someone new every day, get papers for neighbours and get their shopping

Be mindful of other feelings, be more communicative when I see my neighbours

Promote inclusivity

Listen to others, talk to someone I have never met GP surgery, bus, train etc

Reach out to some friends who are new mums – it can be isolating and overwhelming

Be a volunteer – read a book to someone

Take part in more volunteering in the community

I will make more of an effort to engage with people in my community

I will be there more for people in my community

To take more opportunities to help other

Visit my friend who recently broke her hip

I will play badminton with anyone

Not be afraid to speak to someone I don't know

Take my friend for a monthly lunch as she has just lost her sister

Try to continue as long as possible

Nag the council into doing more to make Sunderland an age friendly city

Keep as active as possible

If something needs doing do it

Create a club that is open to everyone to help connect with people

Check on those I have lost contact with to see how they are doing

Attend social events to meet new people in the community

Spend more time outdoors connecting with people

Give space for people to talk and me to listen

Join a club with likeminded people and exchange ideas

Go out and meet say hello to strangers adopt a grannie

Ask how they are and take more interest in their lot

Make people happy 😊

I pledge to make time for myself as well as caring for other

To meet up with friends and not just rely on facebook

### **Organisational**

Start a LGBT/trans youth group

Share knowledge about connectedness Day, try to create new connections and maintain to existing to be

to benefit customers.



Promote connectedness and share information gained today within anchor Hanover schemes.

Approach people in the local community to advise of our services more networking we are here to help

Allowing people to tell their stories

I will continue to develop social inclusion agenda for my service users

Bringing like-minded people together to share stories and experiences to support each other

Invite previous GFS members to get together to share memories

Support young people to talk about loneliness

Start new GFS groups to help tackle loneliness in young people

Support people to come together to connect

Connect with other organisations in the area to make GFS really inclusive

Look to integrate and not segregate 'inclusiveness rules'

Within reach schemes trained volunteers will keep older carers who are isolated within reach to support.

Weekly support group to bring veterans together

To continue supporting kinship families and reduce isolation

Take the time to interact with library customers