

OLDER PEOPLE: ADDING LIFE TO YEARS - TACKLING SOCIAL ISOLATION



Community Belonging

1 in 4 adults have strong sense of community belonging



Healthy Life Expectancy (Males at 65)

55.6% in East Ayrshire, compared with 57.2% in Scotland



Mental Wellbeing Score (Older people - over 65)

Improved from 23.7 to 24.4 (Scotland: 24.5)



Let's Get Together Events

400 (100%) of participants thought loneliness was an issue in their community



Healthy Life Expectancy (Females at 65)

40.1% in East Ayrshire, compared to 54.4% in Scotland



Mental Wellbeing Score (Younger adults - 16-34)

Fallen from 23.5 to 23.2 (Scotland: 24.1)

Practice Example

Connect Call has reduced social isolation and loneliness and maintained safety for 127 people who previously received nuisance calls that are now blocked, through its **telephone befriending service**.

The 14 volunteers, in addition to their befriending and signposting offer, have developed a weekly 'Brew and Blether' drop in at WG13 in Kilmarnock to give people an informal and relaxed opportunity to come together and connect.

Jennifer is 73 years old, has a chronically ill son and recently lost her husband. She was struggling to cope on her own, **experiencing loneliness and anxiety** that prevented her from going out.

Through a referral by the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Community Action Team, Connect Call engaged with Jennifer on a twice weekly basis, helping her to attend the '**Brew and Blether**' drop in, expanding her peer network and encouraging her to join a computing class where she learned to Facetime her daughter who lives overseas.

Connect Call now only engages with Jennifer once a week as she is now more confident and is actively getting out and about in her local community.

COMMENTARY

Loneliness and social isolation can have significant impacts on local people, particularly in terms of health and wellbeing. In East Ayrshire, a dedicated steering group has been taking forward to address loneliness and social isolation, among older people and the wider community, building on and adding value to the existing work taking place in local communities. A sample of activity progressed in 2018/19 is provided below.

- From the available baseline data and other research, it was recognised that loneliness and social isolation **affect all age groups** and it was agreed to widen the scope. This ensured alignment with the national **End Loneliness Together** campaign, to tackle stigma, raise awareness, normalise the experience and support and encourage re-connection.
- Building capacity across our workforce to build confidence about having **caring conversations**. Examples include:
 - A **Wellbeing Check** at East Ayrshire Community Hospital Day Service, including discussions about loneliness, supported by Public Health staff.
 - Better Health work within University Hospital Crosshouse includes raising awareness of social isolation and loneliness with staff and encouraging the use of the **Better Health Hub** as a referral pathway to provide support at critical moments.
- **Raising awareness** among communities, in particular older people, to increase understanding, reduce stigma and promote kindness and self-care. Examples include:
 - Developing a training pack, which aims to support communities to promote ways to **build individual resilience** in relation to loneliness and tackle stigma.
 - Exploring funding opportunities through the Digital Charter Fund to support individuals to build up digital knowledge, skills and understanding, thereby **reducing social isolation and loneliness**. A Digital Skills Survey is underway with residents from each of the Supported Accommodation Units.
- The three Locality Planning Groups across East Ayrshire (Northern, Southern and Kilmarnock) hosted four **'Get Together' Engagement events**, with 400 participants, which provided information from local and national organisations, groups and services. These events raised awareness of loneliness among communities as well as the support and opportunities available for local people.
- Developing the **support pathways** for the most **disadvantaged and lonely** local people. Examples include:
 - Continuing to **map local assets, activities and services** across East Ayrshire, to understand where **opportunities and gaps** exist that can directly or indirectly impact on social isolation and loneliness.
 - **Walking Football** has been established in East Ayrshire and is delivered via the Community Sports Hubs in Stewarton, North West Kilmarnock and Cumnock, which has been well attended, predominantly by older adults. **Badminton for older adults** has been established at the Grange Leisure Centre and Doon Leisure Centre via the Community Sports Hubs and is free of charge, reducing any cost barriers.
 - Over the coming year, the aim is to develop an easy and reliable **referral service** and support pathways for critical moments of transition: particularly traumatic life events.