

PLYMOUTH CITY COUNCIL

Subject:	Loneliness Action Plan
Committee:	Health and Wellbeing Board
Date:	8 October 2020
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Kate Taylor
CMT Member:	Ruth Harrell (Director of Public Health)
Author:	Rachel Silcock (Strategic Commissioning Manager)
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Ref:	
Key Decision:	No
Part:	I

Purpose of the report:

The purpose of this report is to inform the Board about the work taking place on addressing loneliness and the work of the Loneliness Action Group and seeks the support of the Board. The Health and Wellbeing Board adopted the Loneliness Action Plan (Pledge 55 of the Council's Pledges) in March 2019. This report updates the Board on progress with this. Loneliness is a growing problem, and its effects have been recognised nationally and internationally. In Plymouth services and activities exist to support people to create and sustain new and existing relationships with others. However, we do need to do more work on this area, including awareness raising and reducing the stigma attached to loneliness; the aforementioned Loneliness Action Group will work with charities, social care providers, NHS, local employers, businesses, and others on delivering action plan to ease loneliness.

The Corporate Plan 2018 - 2022:

This Loneliness action plan will support the Corporate Vision through:

- Helping to deliver the priority of a Caring Council in adopting a whole society approach to loneliness to make a real difference to the health and well-being of the residents of Plymouth through challenging times.
 - Putting citizens at the heart of their communities and work together with our partners to serve the best interests of our City in a co-operative way. We will achieve this together by developing strong and resilient individuals and communities, destigmatising loneliness and providing opportunities for people to take part
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**Implications for Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications:
Including finance, human, IT and land:**

All resource implications have been considered and incorporated within the MTFS and Business Plans.

**Other Implications: e.g. Child Poverty, Community Safety, Health and Safety
and Risk Management:**

The work described in this report complements the Council’s existing policy framework with respect to the above.

Equality and Diversity

Has an Equality Impact Assessment been undertaken? Where potential equality and diversity implications are identified from the implementation of any new activities arising from the pledge completion, assessments will be undertaken in line with the Council’s policies.

Not yet, this will be developed as part of the work of the Loneliness Action Group.

Recommendations and Reasons for recommended action:

Health and Wellbeing Board adopt the updated Loneliness Action Plan. Further updates will be provided to the Health & Wellbeing Board on progress.

Alternative options considered and rejected:

The Loneliness Action Plan is not adopted.

Published work / information:

Background papers:

Title	Part I	Part II	Exemption Paragraph Number							
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Council Pledges	X									

Sign off:

Fin djn. 20. 21. 95	Djn.	Leg MS/ 29.0 9.20	It	Mon Off		HR		Assets		IT		Strat Proc	
Originating SMT Member Ruth Harrell, Director for Public Health													
Has the Cabinet Member(s) agreed the contents of the report? Yes													

The Impact of Loneliness

The vast majority of us will feel lonely at some point in our lives, it is a natural human emotion which can mean different things to different people. However, sustained feelings of loneliness can have negative impacts on a whole host of aspects of our lives, including our health, wellbeing, productivity, and self-esteem. Frequently feeling lonely has been linked to early deaths and an increased risk of coronary heart disease, stroke, depression, cognitive decline and Alzheimer's. Certain cohorts of people in society may be more susceptible to experiencing loneliness and there are also certain times in people's lives when they are more susceptible to experiencing it: bereavement, losing job, moving to a new place. Office for National Statistics recently analysed how various factors affect the likelihood of feeling lonely, those who reported being lonely more often were likely to have at least one of several specific characteristics, including being aged 16 to 24, being widowed, having poor health, having a long-term illness or disability. The current lockdown situation has exacerbated this all of this, and affected a broader swathe of society.

The Work at National and Local Level So Far:

Central government appointed a Minister for tackling loneliness and created a strategy for tackling it in late 2018. The three key areas and some of the gains made so far are below; this is an ongoing piece of work and has particularly been relevant during the lockdown to deal with the pandemic:

- reduce stigma – talking about it, a national conversation, the latest related to this is the # Let's Talk Loneliness campaign
- ensure that it is considered in all areas of government policy making
- Improving the evidence base, creation of new measures including a new public health outcomes framework measure, ONS measures.

Locally in Plymouth are many services and activities to support people to create and sustain new and existing relationships with others. New services have been set up since the start of the lockdown such as Caring for Plymouth and Good Neighbours and services and organisations have adapted to work in different ways including use of volunteers. We do need to do more work on this area, and the aforementioned Loneliness Action Group will work with charities, social care providers, local employers, businesses, and others on delivering a whole society action plan to ease loneliness.

Vision:

Plymouth to be a place where we can all have strong social relationships. Where families, friends and communities support each other, especially at vulnerable points where people are at greater risk of loneliness. And where loneliness is recognised and acted on without stigma or shame, so that we all look out for one another.

Aims of the work of the Loneliness Action Group:

- Channel and share good practice,

- Raise awareness to tackle the stigma associated with loneliness encouraging people to talk about how they feel and be more comfortable about asking for support (the Let's Talk Loneliness toolkit may be used for this at <https://letstalkloneliness.co.uk>)
- Use measurement tools and the knowledge of group members to determine prevalence and where people are in City who have the characteristics more likely to often experiencing loneliness
- Consider what the different agencies and organisations represented in the group can do as there needs to be a whole society approach that involves civil society - neighbours, small groups volunteers local and national charities, public-sector NHS local government libraries schools colleges housing organisations
- Link and learn from other areas good practice including keeping abreast of the work of central government in this area
- Think about how we tackle loneliness through place strengthening community infrastructure and assets
- Consider how we provide support such as transport and technology to help sustain connections

Recommendation to Health and Wellbeing Board

To adopt the updated attached action plan which contains proposals for ways in which the national strategy areas for action can be implemented locally, to provide support and encouragement for implementation