



## **Plymouth Healthy Communities Briefing for Plymouth Health & Wellbeing Board**

### **The aim**

To help Plymouth become even better connected, supporting those most socially isolated.

### **Key points**

- Collaborative project across all key service providers, commissioners and community groups (via POP), reporting to Local Care Partnership Delivery Group.
- Funded via The National Lottery Community Fund (TNLCF), support from The Kings Fund.
- Current stage started in April 2021 and will end September/October 2021.
- If successful, the next stage will secure £400k of further investment.
- The current stage is a project designed to listen and hear to Plymouth residents and connect their views to strategic decision making.
- Co-design means opportunities for collaboration and action will be seen across the system – at individual, community, organisation and system levels.
- The history of the project can be seen in detail here: <https://pop.kumu.io/an-emerging-approach-of-co-design>

### **Context**

Seeing the impact of social isolation and related factors has led to one priority focussing on community and social connectedness. This project aims to stimulate system transformation by focussing on the:

- Technical challenges – the steps from community response to health system impacts are non-linear; and
- Cultural challenges – the complexity challenges the balance between command and control and facilitative responses.

Whilst we know connections and relationships play a central role in individual and community wellbeing, we need to learn how. Woven into highly participative processes, this funding will allow us to test approaches to community capacity building. It provides time to learn, whilst agreeing critical system measures that will allow adoption in future.

For further evidence, see [Reducing social isolation across the lifecourse](#), Public Health England.

### **Method: Participatory co-design**

#### *Step 1: community research*

We are recruiting 'Community Researchers' who will talk to individuals to try and find out what prevents and helps them being connected to friends, family and community and the impact this can have on their health. We are offering training on how to engage in conversations and to record them.

Via participatory workshops, the recorded conversations will be converted into a 'map of experience' or what might be called a "fuzzy cognitive map" (FCM). This is a cognitive map within which the relations between the factors impacting on social connectedness will create a "mental landscape" of the issue. For more information on this technique, please go to: <https://www.cecan.ac.uk/blog/how-to-evaluate-complex-research-impact/>

#### *Step 2: pick a specific focus*

Via further discussion and connecting strategically we will identify the factors we feel present the biggest opportunities in Plymouth to create immediate impact.

#### *Step 3: take action*

Funds will be available to test prototypes. These funds will be available at different levels. We will also work with organisations to create internal tests.

### *Further points*

- Learning from Appreciative Inquiry approaches and the Complex Lives Alliance gives us experience and insight into the power of this type of process.
- Building community capacity to listen to one another builds a valued skill in bringing people together – and a resource that can be used in different engagement projects.

### **Progress**

- Progress has been slowed by lock down and being unable to run face-to-face training.
- A bespoke community conversation training package has been developed.
- 30 people have been trained, natural attrition means 20 are available to carry out conversations. Of this approximately 5 are actively engaging.
- Rachel Silcock (PCC) and Matt Bell (POP) have been speaking to each Local Care Partnership member organisation about how social isolation impacts on each organisation.
- Connections have been built into other pieces of work such as the Social Isolation Conference, 6<sup>th</sup> October.

### **Social Isolation Conference**

This conference is being led by the Social Isolation Forum, a network of organisations who share the aspirations of the Plymouth Healthy Communities project. Already part funded via POP's funding process, the conference is well timed to bring together the city to take the project to the next phase.

### **Next?**

The project will be subject to a midpoint review with TNLCF on the 22<sup>nd</sup> June. We will be discussing the criteria to be successful in the next stage:

- 1. The plan and its anticipated outcomes are credible.**
- 2. The partnership has responded to feedback received from TNLCF and TKF following the Phase One decision group.**
- 3. The partnership has developed its relationships and built a shared commitment to work together across the health and care system (VCSE, local authority, NHS) to address the issue outlined in the original application.**
- 4. The partnership has engaged with its community during Phase One.**
- 5. The outline budget for Phase Two is designed to support key principles of HCT.**
- 6. The partnership has made use of the additional support provided by The King's Fund.**
- 7. The partnership has enabled learning during Phase One.**

Much of the success of the project will rely on connections made into other pieces of complementary work. For example, data is being shared from the existing 200+ conversations held by Plymouth City Council to analyse and working with the Social Isolation Forum we will continue to reach further into communities.

### **Request for support from the Health & Wellbeing Board**

- Publicly recognise the co-design process (and similar work happening elsewhere) as a vital stage in developing services in Plymouth. This will achieve two significant benefits:
  - Show shared commitment to work together across the health & care system.
  - Give added credibility to the process and help to recruit community researchers.
- Formally support the Social Isolation Conference on the 6<sup>th</sup> October 2021 as a significant and complementary piece of work.