

PLYMOUTH CITY COUNCIL

Subject:	Completed Pledge: Loneliness Action Plan
Committee:	Health and Wellbeing Board
Date:	7 March 2019
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Ian Tuffin
CMT Member:	Craig McArdle (Strategic Director for People)
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 fulfil Council **Pledge 55**: Loneliness is a growing problem, and its effects were highlighted by the late Jo Cox MP. Far too many people in Plymouth face life in isolation without human contact. We will work with charities, social care providers and others to publish an action plan to ease loneliness.

Corporate Plan:

The 100 Pledges have informed development of the Corporate Plan and therefore the Pledges have been adopted by the Council as part of delivery of the Corporate Plan and its associated performance management framework.

This Loneliness action plan will support the Corporate Vision through:

- Being **pioneering** in adopting a whole systems 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 with our partners to help us **care for Plymouth**. We will achieve this together by developing strong and resilient individuals and communities, destigmatising loneliness and providing opportunities for people to take part
 - Raising aspirations, increasing wellbeing activity, developing strong and networked communities, people will have increased **confidence in Plymouth**. With citizens, visitors and investors identifying us as a “vibrant, confident, pioneering, place to live and work” with an outstanding quality of life.
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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:

Pledge completions complement 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.

Recommendations and Reasons for recommended action:

Health and Wellbeing Board adopt the 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.	Leg	It	Mon Off		HR		Assets		IT		Strat Proc	
Originating SMT Member Craig McArdle Strategic Director for People													
Has the Cabinet Member(s) agreed the contents of the report? Yes													

The Impact of Loneliness

In October 2018 the government published 'A connected society: A strategy for tackling loneliness – laying the foundations for change', in response to the Jo Cox Commission on Loneliness. The Government strategy defines loneliness as: "A subjective, unwelcome feeling of lack or loss of companionship. It happens when we have a mismatch between the quantity and quality of social relationships that we have, and those that we want."

Loneliness is a feeling that most people will experience at some point in their lives. However, prolonged and extreme exposure to loneliness can seriously impact an individual's well-being, and their ability to function in society. Loneliness has been shown to be linked to poor physical and mental health, and poor personal wellbeing with potentially adverse effects on communities.

The health impact of loneliness can be:

- Higher rates of depression
- Higher rates of dementia
- Increased risk of high blood pressure
- Increased risk of mortality [30% higher than general population – similar to smoking and excess alcohol consumption]
- Increased risk of falls
- Increased use of health and care services
- Increased risk of needing long term care

The national strategy identifies that there are numerous life events that mean people can become lonely – for example, bullying, leaving care, becoming homeless, losing a job, becoming a parent, refugees and asylum seekers, discrimination, carers, victims of crime, ill-health, retirement, divorce and bereavement. The key is to ensure that we support social connectedness at these times for individuals and communities. The aim is to develop strong and connected communities

The Strategy outlines some areas for action for National and Local Government and partners:

- Support and connect with friends, neighbours and community groups, through volunteering and participation.
- Provide leadership and policy while encouraging network creation for sharing, learning and innovation.
- Help to build personal and community resilience, through skills, training and service delivery.
- Commission services and provide holistic health approaches through Health and Wellbeing Boards and provisioning community space and transport
- Provide increased support to employees, customers and the communities they serve.

These areas for action are the basis for the Loneliness Action Plan being launched by the Plymouth Health and Wellbeing Board.

Measuring Loneliness – Plymouth performance

Data collected as part of the national Adult Social Care Survey shows that Plymouth has a performance that is similar to the England average and to comparator Authorities in social connectedness / contentedness. The national Carers survey in 2018 shows an improved score from the previous survey (in which Plymouth was worse than the England average and comparator Authorities), but benchmarking data hasn't yet been received.

Recent local evidence was gathered through a resident postal survey conducted to capture an insight into residents' perceptions and feelings about the city, their community and their life. This was sent out early in 2018 with a closing date at the start of April. Overall 2,296 valid surveys were returned, giving a response rate of 28 per cent.

Overall, when looking at the average scores for the four national wellbeing indicators of: life satisfaction; feeling that what one does in life is worthwhile, happiness yesterday and anxiousness yesterday, Plymouth has seen an upturn when compared with the data collected in the 2014 Plymouth Wellbeing Survey, however still down in comparison to national data from 2017.

Significantly higher levels of dissatisfaction, and poorer wellbeing:

- Those in the younger age group: 16-24yrs
- Those 'limited a lot' through a disability/health problem
- Residents of certain wards (varies slightly - Southway, Honicknowle, Efford and Lipson, Drake)

There are some typical profiles in Plymouth of people who may be at risk of loneliness:

- Widowed older homeowners living alone with long term health conditions
- Unmarried middle-agers with long term health conditions
- Younger renters with little trust and sense of belonging to their area/neighbourhood

Consultation to develop the Plymouth Action Plan

The government and the Campaign to End Loneliness have carried out extensive national consultation.

In Plymouth, a conversation was held with partners and stakeholders at a Wellbeing System Design Group (SDG) in August 2018, using the evidence collected from the above survey and this has informed the creation of the action plan. A draft plan was then developed and consultation on the plan was held at a second Wellbeing SDG meeting in January 2019.

Recommendation to Health and Wellbeing Board

To adopt the attached action plan which contains proposals for ways in which the national strategy areas for action can be implemented locally.