

ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL

A meeting of the Adult Social Care and Services Scrutiny Panel was held on 11 November 2020.

PRESENT: Councillors S Hill, D Jones, J Platt, G Purvis, D Rooney, J A Walker and G Wilson

OFFICERS: S Blood, M Dawson (ABM) C Breheny, M Jackland, and E Scollay,

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE Councillor J Goodchild.

DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None declared.

1 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 14 OCTOBER 2020

The minutes of 14 October 2020 were submitted and approved as a true record.

2 AGEING BETTER MIDDLESBROUGH (ABM) - UPDATE AND FUTURE/LEGACY PLANNING

The Chair welcome Michelle Dawson, Manager of Aging Better Middlesbrough to provide an update regarding work undertaken to date, impact of Covid 19, together with plans for the future.

The Manager outlined that she worked for Middlesbrough and Stockton Mind and had worked there for the past 10 years. Aging Better Middlesbrough (ABM) was originally a 6 year funded programme of £6million over 6 years (April 2015- March 2021) to reduce loneliness and isolation for older people. The programme is a test and learn project co-designed with older people. The project gained evidence as at the time there was very little information about what worked. The project has gathered loads of Loads and loads of learning about loneliness, older people, communities, commissioning and partnerships, they have worked with thousands of older people.

The Panel learnt that the ABM website had a dedicated learning page, which contains information, not only from Middlesbrough but also from the 7 ABM projects across the Country to understand what works to reduce loneliness. Middlesbrough speciality, is around working with older people with complexity, mental health and chronic loneliness. The Manager outlined that chronic loneliness was different to transitional loneliness e.g. an impact from covid, whereby older people find themselves lonely in a transition of time.

Over the past 5 years, ABM has delivered a whole host of projects with older people; which has included long term intervention, asset based development, peer and befriending projects , projects within the BME community, digital support for older people, , projects with older woman from Pakistan, projects with asylum seekers and refugees, small grants projects and projects around dance and exercise. The Manager outlined that most projects which you could think of to engage with older people and reduce loneliness and isolation have been tried.

In March 2020 at the start of the Covid- 19 pandemic, like most, the way working for ABM had to change. The Director of Adult Social Care and Health Integration contacted the Manager due to the number of older people coming through Help BORO and the shielding HUB.

In response to a request from the council, Middlebrough and Stockton Mind became a 'destination' point for people who were lonely or needed emotional support. They undertook the following projects:

- Ageing Better formed a telephone support project for older people, bringing together staff from four different organisations. ABM also telephoned over 600 older people who they were in regular contact to check on their well being and to engage them in supplementary telephone support where they had additional need.
- ABM delivered wellbeing packs, activity packs to older people.

- They provided digital support and bought digital devices and data for older people to enable older people to use their devices and make the most of digital technology. They were also linked to a digital befriender.
- Middlesbrough and Stockton MIND carry out Social Prescribing, however ABM launched social prescribing on 1 April 2020 to support GP's who needed additional support to link them into social prescribing link workers.
- Age Friendly Middlesbrough connected people together, to enable the community groups to connect and find ways not to duplicate and share resources.

The Manager outlined that thankfully the lottery announced that they would not be ended funding in 2021, as they recognised that aging better played a crucial role in the recovery of covid. The County is not talking recovery now however still funding has been supplied for aging better Middlesbrough until March 2022. Funding for the year has been halved compared to the £1million originally received for the project on a year basis so the programme is currently prioritising what services they will deliver.

The services that they will be focusing on in the next 15- 18 months will be as follows:

- Telephone support plus- holistic support for lonely and isolated support. It has a link to improving physical activity for older people, so we are hoping to link them more robustly into programmes such as Falls prevention and physical activity.
- Digital support with expansion into BAME communities- providing Investing people and culture (IPC) digital support for BAME communities, as we are conscious the programme is not very diverse in its engagement.
- Funding the falls prevention strategy- aging better Middlesbrough funds an occupational therapist into the Falls Prevention Team in order to free up the Falls Prevention team to work on the Falls Prevention Strategy.
- Age Friendly Middlesbrough- we will continue to fund the officer to conduct the mapping, connection and capacity building work
- Mental health therapy- this service will be expanded as ABM currently has a waiting list.
- Development support to social prescribing

The Manager further outlined that the partnerships especially with the Health sector have improved over the past few years.

- The Manager advised that she chairs the Digital development steering group, which looks to conquer the digital divide. It is something she feels everyone should be investing in, but unfortunately this was not the case. They therefore created this partnership and attracted £20,000 funding to develop an online platform whereby businesses can donate devices, which will be upgraded by the private sector and they will keep 50% of these devices and donate 50% back into the platform. Organisations will then have an online login to apply for devices for service users and community groups. The group is also looking at online support for all an all age digital support group. This is being run with the Teesside combined authority to try and address what the connectivity issues will be in the future and what we might need to do to bridge the gap until this occurs.
- Falls prevention strategy - The Manager co- Chairs the Falls Prevention steering group which has put Middlesbrough and Stockton MIND and ABG in touch with health professionals.
- Supporting Older People through the winter (with You've Got This)- informal partnership and how we can share our resources to support older people.

The Manager further discussed the gaps in the system:

- There is a requirement for a single point of access for all the support available to older people. There is currently 100's of telephone numbers to access services and there needs to be a strategy to join services up, across public health, CCG and the Council.
- Better joining up between everyone - 72% of older people at the start of lock down had no access to the internet. Local GP services and Public health are trying to digital health support, whilst not investing in the required amount of support to get people onto the internet.
- Long term investment in digital development (72%) and telephone support- ABM are already in demand
- The gap that will be left when ABM has gone.

Whilst the Manager recognises that at the moment when support it required it defaults to ABM, there is that apprehension of what will be done to the work and partnerships when ABM

has gone.

A member queried how ABM support older people online? In response, the Manager outlined that they were there to help and reassure older people to protect themselves against online scammers and the police deliver training as well as google providing online support. The HOPE foundation support older people to get online under their own motivations, for example a zoom account.

Another member also queried whether addition resources would assist the work, and in response, the Manager advised that yes it does assist, however it is more looking at a ore joint up approach with the Council, Health, Public health and looking at ways of delivery. The befriending service has evidence to say that this is a fundamental part to reducing loneliness. This provides a voice, a friendly support. The Manager did however advise that they have been seeing older people face to face where possible, for example delivering activity packs and birthday cakes!

The Manager also stressed that providing information on activities whilst does help some older people engage, those who are lonely and isolated will not attend community events and without these bridging people are essential get getting people to events.

****11am**** the panel paused for the 2 minute silence.

The Director of Social Care and Health Integration praised the work of Aging Better and advised that what they report is evidence based and the truth. He advised that there is discussion of a 5 year recover of covid, in terms of mental health, trauma which in turn may develop to isolation for some people. There is an additional legacy of ill health and therefore the role of Aging better is fundamental in this. The Director advised that the support of the panel on moving forward would be greatly appreciated.

Following a discussion, the panel agreed that they would like to receive an update in 9 months -time and from there look at putting forward recommendation of how further joint work could be undertaken to support some of the key services to continue past 2022.

AGREED-

That the information be noted

That the panel receive a further update on Aging Better Middlesbrough in 9 months time.

3 REDUCING LONELINESS AND/ OR SOCIAL ISOLATION IN LATER LIFE- AN UPDATE IN RESPECT OF THE ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL'S 2018 REVIEW OF REDUCING LONELINESS AND/ OR SOCIAL ISOLATION IN LATER LIFE- TO CONSIDER AN UPDATE FROM THE DIRECTOR OF ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND HEALTH INTEGRATION ON THE PROGRESS MADE WITH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AGREED RECOMMENDATIONS/ACTIONS.

THE PANEL HAS ALSO REQUESTED AN UPDATE IN RELATION TO HOW COVID-19 HAS IMPACTED ON SOCIAL ISOLATION AND STEPS BEING TAKEN TO ADDRESS THIS.

In 2018, the Panel undertook a review into Reducing Loneliness and/ or social isolation in Later life. Part of the evidence, the Panel heard from Michelle Dawson, Manager of Aging Better Middlesbrough who support older people in this field. The Panel had received an updated action plan detailing updates on the recommendations and also asked for information relating to supporting older people curing Covid-19

Covid recovery

In terms of covid recovery, the Director outlined the work that TRUV are currently undertaking of how we respond to the mental health issues over the next 5 years. Covid 19 will have touched many peoples' lives through either personal or personal capacity.

The Director outlined that they have been the impact of Covid 19 in terms of service users

restriction of mobility, difficult to socialise with family and friends, ability to access services e.g. day care and difficulty of visiting loved ones in care homes.

It outlined as the Country enter the second lock down, most of the day care centres have remained open in a covid safe way. In terms of visiting care homes, there is a balance of Individual human rights and the duty to protect the collective and this will always be a fought decision to take.

The Director stated that the Director of Public Health and the Director of Social Care and Health Integration have to make a decision on visiting due to the number of infection rates in the region and it was decided to restrict visiting to essential only with the caveat of end of life. The Panel learnt that the Social infection, protection and control grant fund was introduced to help care homes with the infection of Covid. In Middlesbrough, some of this money was put into a grant fund whereby care homes could bid for money to introduce visiting pods, or additional outdoor hand washing and it hoped that this would facilitate visiting. However with the new lockdown, the guidance issued means some of the pods do not meet the requirements, however the Council is working on a home by home basis to see if they can facilitate this, however saving lives in paramount and safety will always be put first.

The ABM Manager also added that in terms of isolation and loneliness all aspects are linked and need to be interlinked e.g. not being able to see their friends, family, catching covid and we shouldn't talk about one without the other.

A Board member queried whether there was support in place for home workers or are experiencing isolation. In response, the Manager advised that ABM hadn't done any specific work, as they generally work with those who have complex needs and who have been out of work for long periods and never been in steady work. But she hopes that organisations would offer services to support their workers during this period.

In terms of the recommendations, a panel member raised that the briefing session on loneliness and isolation should be repeated to ensure all members were aware of the issues. The Democratic services officer would arrange this in due course.

The Manager also outlined that in terms of isolation during Covid, there was evidence that this was displaying in young people. A panel member also added that this issue should be raised with the Children and Young people's care scrutiny panel for consideration.

AGREED-

That the information contained in the updated action plan be noted.

That a further member briefing on loneliness and isolation be arranged.