

**Name of meeting:** Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee (OSMC)

**Date:** 13 September 2022

**Title of report:** Loneliness and Social Isolation in Kirklees Post Pandemic – Role of the Loneliness Steering Group

**Purpose of report:**

This report is to:

- Provide background information to support discussion about the role of the Loneliness Steering Group.
- Enable OSMC to contribute to the ongoing review of the role of the steering group, in order to make best use of this group in the future.

For Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee to:

1. Note the information in the report
2. Review, discuss and suggests ways of developing the role in the future.

<b>Key Decision - Is it likely to result in spending or saving £250k or more, or to have a significant effect on two or more electoral wards?</b>	<b>Not Applicable</b>
<b>Key Decision - Is it in the <u>Council's Forward Plan (key decisions and private reports)?</u></b>	<b>Key Decision – No</b> <b>Private Report/Private Appendix – No</b>
<b>The Decision - Is it eligible for call in by Scrutiny?</b>	<b>Not Applicable</b>
<b>Date signed off by <u>Strategic Director</u> &amp; name</b>	<b>Mel Meggs</b> <b>31/08/22</b>
<b>Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance?</b>	<b>No Applicable</b>
<b>Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning?</b>	<b>Not Applicable</b>
<b>Cabinet member</b>	<b>Councillor Musarrat Khan – Health and Social Care</b>

**Electoral wards affected:** This piece of work covers the Kirklees-wide response to tackling loneliness.

**Public or private:** Public

**Has GDPR been considered?** This report does not contain any personal information.

## **1. Summary**

Chronic and severe loneliness can have an impact on a person's health and wellbeing and lead to greater use of health and social care services.

Kirklees Council and partners developed a vision to tackle loneliness in 2019:

*'Kirklees is a place where people and communities are more connected and support each other to develop meaningful relationships and reduce loneliness'.*

A partnership group was set up in 2020 to prioritise key workstreams and work together to 'make loneliness everyone's business'. The group has continued to operate throughout 2021 and 2022.

In 2022, the steering group have reviewed the role of the group and part of this has included expanding the membership.

This report is to aid discussion about the role of the Loneliness Steering Group and contribute to a review to make the best use of this group in the future.

This report includes background information that includes:

- Summary of role of the group and how it has evolved.
- Summary of priority areas of work and achievements.

## **2. Information Required to Take a Decision**

### **2.1 Background**

Loneliness is part of the human condition and is experienced by most people at some times in their life. Chronic loneliness, however, can have a strong impact on a person's physical and emotional wellbeing. Social isolation can be a risk for someone becoming lonely.

A partnership group was set up in 2018 with interested stakeholders to explore the issue of loneliness. This subsequently grew over time based on partners interest in the topic. Early members of the group included:

- Health and Social Care Commissioning
- Social Care Operations
- Public Health
- Voluntary Sector Organisations including, Jo Cox Foundation, mental health, carers and other community organisations
- Third Sector Leaders
- Kirklees Council Community Plus
- Acute Trusts
- West Yorkshire Fire Service
- Kirklees Libraries

- Kirklees Council Policy Team
- Kirklees Strategic Housing
- Kirklees Museums and Galleries
- Lawrence Batley Theatre
- Kirklees Council 3<sup>rd</sup> Sector team

As a first step, partners developed a vision and strategic goals based on national and local intelligence. In addition, a session was set up to engage citizens in the topic to help shape the vision. The vision and strategic goals were developed and shared with the Joint Health and Wellbeing Board in 2019.

**Vision:**

*‘Kirklees is a place where people and communities are more connected and support each other to develop meaningful relationships and reduce loneliness’.*

**Strategic goals:**

- Making loneliness everyone’s business – encouraging citizens, front line workers, planners, and systems leaders to have regard to tackling loneliness as part of day-to-day life or working life.
- Making the most of existing assets to address loneliness – citizens, communities, staff, spaces, and support offers that can support or signpost to help.
- Understanding the experiences and expectations for different groups, communities throughout the life course – to support tailored responses.
- Fostering personalised approaches for those that need extra support to overcome barriers to developing meaningful connection

Partners met to explore priorities, but this proved challenging based on the broad scope of the strategy and the capacity to respond.

In March 2020, a loneliness conference was set up and led by Jo Cox Foundation and the Kirklees Befriending Partnership, supported by Kirklees Council. A wide variety of professionals attended and contributed their views on support available, challenges and gaps.

The Covid- 19 pandemic and subsequent lockdowns rapidly followed, with many staff diverted into different roles to aid the pandemic response. A decision was made to create a smaller steering group to lead and prioritise the future strategy supported by a wider partnership group. The rationale for this was that it is challenging to agree priorities with a large group and many organisations were facing other high priority demands on their time. A smaller group with those partners, that led the conference would assist in developing some priorities within the strategy.

The new steering group membership included:

- Kirklees Council Local Integrated Partnerships including Local Area Co-ordination and Public Health (Chaired by Carol Gilchrist)
- Kirklees Council Children and Families Services
- Northorpe Hall Child and Family Trust
- Jo Cox Foundation

- Kirklees Befriending Partnership representing Yorkshire Children’s Centre, Locala, Age UK Calderdale and Kirklees, The Kirkwood, Royal Voluntary Service (RVS).
- Clinical Commissioning Group
- Third Sector Leaders
- Partnership Mental Health Commissioning Manager
- Citizen representative with extensive professional, volunteer and lived experience.

In addition, Locala Health and Wellbeing also joined the group in 2021.

The original terms of reference agreed can be found in Appendix 1.

The steering group agreed some priorities based on national and local intelligence and feedback from the 2020 Kirklees Loneliness Conference. A summary of the priorities can be found in Appendix 2.

During the first lockdown, the wider partners were invited to good practice sharing sessions, of which a small core group attended. Following that, whenever possible information was shared with the wider partners, but it became increasingly challenging to sustain this.

During the pandemic a national Connection Coalition was set up and Jo Cox Foundation suggested that a local Connection Coalition <https://www.connectioncoalition.org.uk/> would help to support partnership working and provide much needed capacity to ‘turbo charge’ wider collaboration and action based on joint working and sharing good practice. A coalition could support the key strategic goals. The steering group agreed that this would be a great opportunity to pilot this approach on a local basis. Appendix 3 provides more detail on the rationale for the proposed approach.

A bid was developed by Jo Cox Foundation with input from the steering group. This was taken to the Community Investment Fund in summer 2021 but was unsuccessful. The Jo Cox Foundation have considered alternative approaches but have recently confirmed that they are still keen to pursue this idea in West Yorkshire with a willing partner, subject to funding resources.

In 2022, the steering group reviewed their membership and the terms of reference. Steering group members were invited via email and via meetings, to share their thoughts on how the steering group could be further developed.

## 2.2 Key Challenges

- The loneliness strategy is not a ‘one off project’. It requires a long- term programme of activity across partners to ‘make loneliness everyone’s business’.
- The Covid-19 pandemic has affected people differently. Some people have resumed their former activities from prior to the pandemic, whilst others may have acquired new barriers to meaningful social connection such as reduced confidence, loss of loved ones, disability or ill health.
- There is no ‘one size fits all’ approach – reducing loneliness and isolation requires a range of support options as well as systems-level enablers such as access to transport and digital technologies. Appendix 4 illustrates examples of the range of activities that can support people to have meaningful connection as well as a summary of the ‘Promising Approaches Framework’, endorsed by Campaign to End Loneliness.
- The scope is broad (a life course approach, covering all age ranges), so there is a need to make loneliness everyone’s business through a wide partnership approach. Resources to support this

work need to be sustained to maximise impact. This necessitates joint working approach to ensure that vulnerable people of all ages are identified, supported or signposted to resources/ support offers and realistic resources to deliver priority projects.

- Loneliness still carries a stigma – some people may not wish to identify as lonely or recognise that they are feeling lonely. They may not be in touch with front line services. Also, they may not opt into specialist services (that are associated with loneliness, e.g., befriending), preferring more generic options that facilitate social interaction. This compounds the challenge of identifying the most vulnerable people. This reinforces the need for a partnership approach to identifying people who would benefit from improved social connection.

## 2.3 Options

The following were considered as part of the review of the role and membership of the steering group:

- Future role of the group
- Principles and values
- Membership and leadership
- Meeting locations, frequency and format
- Name of the group
- Priorities and successes

Alternative options were put forward for consideration of the steering group including:

1. No steering group - continue to promote ‘making loneliness everyone's business’ in our organisations/ areas and collaborate through existing networks / or via connection coalition approach
2. Strategy to be led on a place basis – place-based plans via place-based partnerships and Community Anchors
3. Separate but interconnected strategies for different life course stages – children and families, adults, older adults. These could be owned separately but could be brought together to share good practice and explore interfaces
4. Loneliness strategy nested in an existing strategy and linked workstreams (e.g., Mental Wellbeing linked the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy)
5. Strategy/ steering group led by a partner organisation or Co-chairing options.

## Summary of Feedback from Steering Group

<p><b>Core functions</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding the local needs and setting priorities in response to the intelligence</li> <li>• Overseeing/ ‘Owning’ and driving the strategy</li> <li>• Monitoring outputs/ outcomes the strategy</li> <li>• Collaborative plan across the steering group to understand lived experience.</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Influencing – making loneliness/ quality social connection everyone's Business</li> <li>• Acting as a catalyst – creating the conditions for citizens and communities, services and planners to prevent and tackle loneliness. Develop an engagement and influencing plan – co-ordinated plan including presenting/ campaigns/ promotion of awareness and identification/ signposting/ empowering communities to develop solutions/ economic costs as well as human costs. Promoting the benefits of quality social connection.</li> <li>• Identifying opportunities for development – priority projects/ pilot projects – catalyst for new projects and innovation where needed and identifying resources to deliver.</li> <li>• Offering mutual support where there are blocks and celebrating good practice across the steering group members.</li> <li>• Supporting wider partnership working - facilitating good practice sharing across Kirklees. Steering group to set up and deliver annual engagement events.</li> <li>• Potential to use 'Promising Approaches Framework' to help shape place-based priorities.</li> </ul>
<b>Membership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grow to include Housing, Active Citizens and Democracy, Social Care including Care Homes, Huddersfield Town Foundation, Refugees and Asylum Seeker strategic input.</li> <li>• Deputies to cover in absence to support continuity of work.</li> <li>• Recruit additional citizens with lived experiences.</li> </ul>
<b>Leadership- Alternative chairing/ co-chairing options?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No current wish to change existing arrangement.</li> <li>• Governance to be explored once Terms of Reference agreed.</li> </ul>
<b>Change of name?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Different views expressed. Keen to reflect the collaborative action focus but also to reflect the role in owning the strategy work.</li> <li>• Support to use more positive language - promoting social connection in title alongside tackling loneliness</li> </ul>
<b>Meeting formats</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concerns that people would not have the time to attend face to face meetings in view of travel time. Ideally it could be a face-to-face session for the steering group once a year and a wider partnership group engagement event on annual basis.</li> <li>• Support for themed sessions. Keenness for members of the steering group to have a section to share and celebrate good practice/ stories and learn from each other.</li> </ul>
<b>Achievements/ successes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Summarise any outputs/ outcomes on annual basis.</li> </ul>
<b>Priorities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To be fully considered based on latest Current Living in Kirklees (CLIK) Survey 2021 data and other emerging lived experience data.</li> <li>• Noted headline CLIK data and recent research on loneliness in London <a href="https://whatworkswellbeing.org/blog/loneliness-in-london-what-do-we-know-and-where-are-the-evidence-gaps/">https://whatworkswellbeing.org/blog/loneliness-in-london-what-do-we-know-and-where-are-the-evidence-gaps/</a> and 'big 5' priority groups suggesting need for:</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Links to poverty strategy</li> <li>• Links to social care- disability and long-term conditions</li> <li>• Young adults remain a priority</li> <li>• Links to Housing</li> </ul>
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The updated Terms of Reference can be found in Appendix 5.

Summary of achievements can be found in Appendix 6.

### **Priorities 2022 and Beyond**

The steering group looked at some initial priorities for focus on 2022 onwards. Examples are noted below:

#### **Making Loneliness Everyone’s Business**

- Continue to raise awareness and challenge stigma.
- Continue to influence citizens, staff from the council and from partner organisations to play their part in reducing loneliness.
- Continue to work in partnership - Local Connection Coalition idea to be pursued or an alternative to support enhanced partnership working.
- Strengthening identification and signposting for frontline workers through developing and disseminating an updated resource to support people to identify loneliness and signposting people to Health Education England Loneliness training.
- Strategic alignment – exploring links with other key agendas and workstreams, e.g., Ageing Well, Frailty, Living with Long-term Conditions.
- Maximising opportunities as part of ‘Families Together’ - place based integrated early support.

#### **Making the Most of Existing Assets**

- Continue to support the Kirklees Access Strategy to enable people to access support and activities that facilitate social connection through the Live Well Kirklees information resource.
- Optimising new Community Anchor roles.  
<https://www.wypartnership.co.uk/our-priorities/harnessing-power-communities/VCSE-events/vcse-power-showcase/day2>

Community Anchors are well placed to understand local needs and support response.

- Continuing the co-produced offer for children, young people, and families in school holidays.
- ‘Our Space’ Facilities and Grants Programme – to develop inclusive places to support mental and physical health.

#### **Personalised Responses**

- Development of Befriending Partnership and code of practice to help to facilitate collaborative working to meet local need.
- Virtual Day Opportunities Digital Proof of Concept Platform – sharing learning across partners.
- Tackling anxiety/ low self-esteem and other mental ill health as a key barrier to social connection.

- Targeted Family Support - to improve social connection.
- New personalised care offer (anticipatory care model pilot) delivered in partnership between Kirklees Council and Health partners such as Primary Care Networks and other local health clinicians. This involves proactively identifying people who are frail and offering holistic support as part of having a 'good life' conversation, which includes identifying isolation and loneliness. This builds on the existing service responses of Community Plus and Social Prescribers.

### **Understanding the Needs of Different Communities**

- Further CLiK survey analysis to explore the intelligence in more detail.
- Initial priority groups to understand in more detail - through lived experience and other intelligence gathering:
  - Young Adults
  - Unemployed
  - Employees
  - BAME Communities
  - Children
  - Parents / Carer's

Please note that the above is a preliminary list to focus on in view of the wide scope. This does not mean that other groups are not important. However, this list and the overall priorities above, may be subject to change based on any further analysis of the 2021 CLiK survey and lived experience data and other intelligence such as Place Standard. For example, in the CLiK survey in disabled people and LGBT Plus individuals who responded to the survey indicated significantly higher levels of severe loneliness.

<https://howgoodisourplace.org.uk/>.

### **3. Risks**

- Time commitment from busy partners could impact on full engagement from partners if expectations are set too high - any future approach needs to be realistic to enable sustained involvement across the steering group.
- Recommendations could be challenging to implement without resource to support.
- Lack of resource to develop the wider partnership working alongside steering group priorities.

### **4. Resource Requirements/ Costs**

- See above. Any recommendations for the future need to be a realistic expectation on group member's time. A long-term commitment to resource strong leadership is needed to continue to drive the agenda forwards.

### **5. Timescale**

- Review by steering group members has taken place February to May 2022.
- Updated terms reference were recirculated in July for final comments.
- OSMC to share any initial thoughts at the OSMC meeting on 13 September 2022.



- OSMC representative (s) to attend steering group on 27<sup>th</sup> September 2022.
- OSMC to seek views of steering group members and set timescale for this in due course.

## **6. Services and Agencies involved**

### **Kirklees Loneliness Steering Group**

- Kirklees Council with representation from Local Integrated Partnerships, Commissioning Mental Health) Public Health, Children and Families. Local Area Co-ordination
- Yorkshire Children’s Centre - representing Befriending Partnership and Community Anchors
- Clinical Commissioning Group, (now Kirklees Health and Care Partnership)
- Northorpe Hall Child and Family Trust
- Third Sector Leaders
- Locala Health and Wellbeing community healthcare provider
- Jo Cox Foundation

The Steering group has been recently reviewed and additional partners are being invited to join the group including:

- Housing
- Active Citizens and Democracy
- Strategic Migration and Refugee Manager
- Social Care
- Huddersfield Town Foundation

## **7. Implications for the Council**

### **Working with People**

- This steering group has a volunteer representative with lived experience. The steering group have been looking to recruit further citizen membership to help guide the strategy via the Kirklees Council Co-production Board. Other options include recruitment via partner agencies and Local Integrated Partnerships.

### **Working with Partners**

- The Loneliness Steering Group have been very keen to develop partnership working further. This review supports the broadening out of membership to include a wider range of partners.
- The steering group is still keen to develop additional, wider partnership working to support the work of the steering group.

### **Place Based Working**

- In recognition of the importance of place, presentations about the topic of loneliness have been delivered to place-based working groups in 2021 and 2022, as part of ‘making loneliness

everyone's business'. Front line staff have been encouraged to identify opportunities and act where needed.

- In addition, two 'hyper local pilots' are being considered in two different areas of Kirklees linked to Local Area Co-ordination (Marsden and Slaithwaite and Ravensthorpe, Scout Hill, Pilgrim, and Beckett Estate). Learning will be fed into the steering group.

### **Climate Change and Air Quality**

- It is not anticipated that this review will have a direct impact on climate change or air quality. However, if people are encouraged to be more socially connected, this could result in more people using transport to get out of the house and meet others in the local community. It would not be possible to quantify this.

### **Improving Outcomes for Children**

- The scope of the review includes all ages, so it is anticipated that the longer-term outcomes of this work will improve children's wellbeing by helping to reduce loneliness and associated impacts.

### **Other (e.g., Legal/Financial or Human Resources)**

- Please see resource requirements section above.

### **Do you need an Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)?**

- Whilst we recognise that loneliness can impact disproportionately on some groups across the life course, this piece of work is about exploring how to develop the steering group to plan effective strategic responses in the future. An IIA is not needed at this stage.

## **8. Consultees and their Opinions**

- Members of the existing steering group have been consulted during 2022 as part of a review of the future role of the group.
- To complement this, following discussions with Councillor Smaje (OSMC Chair) input from OSMC is being sought to support this review.
- This work forms part of a broader piece of work.
- The overall scope was developed in consultation with Councillor Smaje, as OSMC Chair and the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee, who was keen to keep the scope broad.
- Councillor Khan – Portfolio Holder Adults & Health – Broadly supported the scope in understanding the impact of Covid 19 on Kirklees communities regarding loneliness. Councillor Khan recognised the potential size and scale of the piece of work and therefore supported the notion of having a scope, which will keep the work focused.

## **9. Next Steps and Timelines**

- OSMC to share any initial thoughts at the OSMC meeting on 13 September 2022.
- OSMC representative(s) to attend steering group on 27<sup>th</sup> September 2022.
- OSMC to seek views of steering group members and set timescale for this in due course.
- The final deadline for this work is to be determined in due course.

Recommendations from the review will help to support in the longer term:

- More lonely people being reached and supported in a personalised way.
- The profile of loneliness as an issue being further raised across council and partners to take collective action.
- Improved collaboration across partners in Kirklees.

## **10. Officer Recommendations and Reasons**

- OSMC notes the work carried out to review the role of the Loneliness Steering Group to date.
- OSMC provides any suggestions on how the future role of the group can be further developed.

## **11. Cabinet Portfolio Holder's Recommendations**

- Not Applicable.

## **12. Contact Officer**

- Jill Greenfield, Service Director, Customer and Communities, Adults and Health – Communities and Access Services, [jill.greenfield@kirklees.gov.uk](mailto:jill.greenfield@kirklees.gov.uk)
- Helen Gilchrist. Project Manager, Local Integrated Partnerships: Adults and Health – Communities and Access Services, [helen.gilchrist@kirklees.gov.uk](mailto:helen.gilchrist@kirklees.gov.uk)

## **13. Background Papers and History of Decisions**

- Portfolio Briefing Meeting (20/9/21) – initial discussion about development of scope
- Senior Leadership Team meeting (10/01/22) – update on scope being developed.
- Portfolio Briefing Meeting (7/3/22) – sharing of draft scope
- Informal Workshop Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee (19/4/22)- scope discussion.
- Portfolio Briefing Meeting (11/7/22) – update on scope
- Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee Meeting – Scope Discussion (26/7/22)
- Portfolio Briefing (8/8)/22 Update following Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee Meeting (26/7/22)

#### **14. Service Director Responsible**

Jill Greenfield, Service Director, Customer and Communities, Adults and Health, Communities and Access Services.