

**Report of the Director of Communities
Social Care and Health Scrutiny Committee**

26th January 2022

**Subject:
Loneliness in Carmarthenshire Task and Finish Review Update Report**

Purpose:

To update the Committee on progress with the recommendations emerging from the Task and Finish Review on Loneliness in Carmarthenshire during the 2018/19 municipal year.

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Introduction:

In the 2018/19 municipal year, the Committee undertook a review into Loneliness in Carmarthenshire. The final report and recommendations were considered at the Committee's meeting of 3rd July 2019. The Review put forward 4 recommendations as follows.

Recommendation One:

Take a strategic approach to loneliness. Identify a senior officer at a Head of Service level, within the Authority to lead and drive an integrated approach to prevention where community connection and addressing loneliness is a priority. This role would work across all disability and age groups and be integrated in the communities' directorate and will also work closely with children and education.

Recommendation Two:

Address loneliness as an important shared priority. When the leadership is in place to drive this agenda, an integrated work stream should be developed to implement a practical and joined up plan to improve community connection, thereby delivering the directive from Welsh government.

Recommendation Three:

Focus on building and supporting community assets. Work with all stakeholders including PSBs to ensure that we maximise all resources. This will include further attention to the community asset transfer approach with the aim of encouraging community activity.

Recommendation Four:

Directly address barriers to connection. A co-designed action plan should be developed to address barriers to connection.

The purpose of the report is to brief the Committee on progress made on the 4 recommendations emerging from the Review.

Progress to date:

The review itself was concluded in July 2019. At the time that the review was concluded, it was anticipated that progress would be made through the creation of a dedicated lead for Prevention as part of the Integrated Services restructure. Plans were afoot to progress with this when the pandemic hit in March 2020, and the pandemic has unfortunately hindered progress as the priority has been to maintain operational service delivery to ensure that social care needs are met as well as protect the population from harm from Covid. There has however been some positive steps forward to tackle loneliness as demonstrated in table below and the new Integrated Service Structure itself is in the process of being finalised, with a view to commencing the consultation process in early 2022. As part of this restructure, a new post will be created who will take a lead in further implementing the recommendations emerging from the Review.

Progress to date against the recommendations is demonstrated in the table below.

	Recommendation	Progress
1	<p><u>Recommendation one:</u> Take a strategic approach to loneliness. Identify a senior officer at a Head of Service level, within the Authority to lead and drive an integrated approach to prevention where community connection and addressing loneliness is a priority. This role would work across all disability and age groups and be integrated in the communities'</p>	<p>Rhian Dawson was appointed to the role of County Systems Director in January 2020. This is an integrated role between Carmarthenshire County Council and Hywel Dda University Health Board and is designed to take a whole population approach to prevention and early intervention. Rhian Dawson therefore provides the strategic lead for prevention at Chief Officer level.</p> <p>As part of the plans for the Integrated Services restructure, it is proposed that a Senior Manager for Prevention will be appointed that will support coordination of our prevention approach for the County. This Senior Manager will be the strategic operational lead for prevention and developing an overall Prevention Strategy for Carmarthenshire will be a</p>

	<p>directorates and will also work closely with children and education.</p>	<p>key priority. A Preventions Group will be established early in 2022 which will oversee development of the Prevention Strategy and implementation of an associated Action Plan. As part of this Strategy, tackling loneliness and isolation will form a critical part.</p>
2	<p><u>Recommendation two:</u> Address loneliness as an important shared priority. When the leadership is in place to drive this agenda, an integrated work stream should be developed to implement a practical and joined up plan to improve community connection, thereby delivering the directive from Welsh government.</p>	<p>It is envisaged that this will be a key area that will emerge out of the action plan linked to the overall Prevention Strategy for Carmarthenshire.</p>
3	<p><u>Recommendation Three:</u> Focus on building and supporting community assets. Work with all stakeholders including PSBs to ensure that we maximise all resources. This will include further attention to the community asset transfer approach with the aim of encouraging community activity.</p>	<p>Again, it is envisaged that this will be a key area that will emerge out of the action plan linked to the overall Prevention Strategy for Carmarthenshire. However, a number of areas have moved forward in relation to this recommendation as follows:</p> <p><i>Community Asset Transfer:</i> The Council welcomes expressions of interest in relation to Community Asset Transfer and will continue to support appropriate future community asset transfer requests. The council's Community Asset Transfer Procedures are in the process of being reviewed. This review will be taking place alongside engagement with Town and Community Councils to ensure that challenges and lessons learnt from dealing with a large</p>

		<p>number of asset transfers of parks and playgrounds are reflected in the proposed new procedures. The proposed engagement will also help identify possible assets suitable for future transfer.</p> <p><i>Carmarthen Town Task group:</i> A specific task group has been established in Carmarthen Town to look at the issue of loneliness. The group was established last September and includes representatives from the 3rd sector. The group has also been looking at the effect of COVID and its impact on loneliness, and is being led by the Town Council.</p> <p><i>Third Sector Support:</i> There are a number of third sector initiatives in place which support those lonely and isolated in the community including the CAVS Befriending Services and support service facilitated via Age Cymru. The Council was recently awarded a grant by Welsh Government in relation to Loneliness and Isolation and is currently working with CAVS so this can be accessed by groups in communities to support initiatives at a very local level.</p>
4	<p><u><i>Recommendation Four:</i></u> Directly address barriers to connection. A co-designed action plan should be developed to address barriers to connection.</p>	<p>This will again form a key part of the Prevention Strategy, but there has already been significant progress against this recommendation as indicated against the key workstreams below:</p> <p><i>Delta Connect:</i> Delta Wellbeing has made excellent progress in rolling out Delta Connect to those isolated and vulnerable in Carmarthenshire, as well as across the region. At the time of writing the report, 2,781 individuals had signed up to Delta Connect which is 108% more than the identified target. Delta</p>

Connect provides customers with regular proactive checking in calls, as well as a rapid response service to support people in crisis at home rather than needing to for example dial 999 unnecessarily. Customer feedback indicates that the social connection that the service provides through the regular proactive calls is a lifeline for many, particularly in these difficult times where people are unable to interact socially in their communities in the usual way. Delta Connect also played a key role early on in the pandemic in reaching out to all those individuals that were shielding in the County as well as providing those that needed them with food parcels.

Virtual Day Support:

As part of the ongoing development of day services for older people, we are piloting a virtual day service for those individuals who previously attended our building-based services. This service facilitated via People First provides individuals with social interaction via electronic devices with others through a range of activities. Our intention is longer term to be in a position to roll this service out further.

Social Prescribers:

In conjunction with our primary care colleagues, we have appointed a number of Social Prescribers who are embedded in GP practices and work with vulnerable people to identify activities and support to help their overall wellbeing. This is a key way that we can work proactively with vulnerable people before they access statutory support and help tackle issues such as social isolation. Once we have appointed to all roles in Carmarthenshire, there will be 6 WTEs across the County.

Dewis:

Carmarthenshire continues to use Dewis as the sole vehicle to provide information on the range of services available in Carmarthenshire. There are still areas to develop within it, but we are continuing to promote its development.

Connect to Kindness:

Connect to Kindness is a regional campaign which aims to create more understanding about the benefit and impact of kindness to ourselves and others in our community. As part of the campaign, regional partners are developing stronger community networks to create an environment where acts of kindness can flourish and happen more easily. To learn more about the Connect to Kindness Campaign in West Wales and the impact that kindness can have on ourselves and our communities, follow the link [Connect to kindness - About](#) .

Wheel of Wellbeing:

As part of the regional Transformation funded initiatives, a Wheel of Wellbeing tool has been designed to be implemented by practitioners to identify what matters to people in terms of their own wellbeing and devise a plan of who that can be supported. This is now being implemented in Carmarthenshire and across the region.

Time Credits:

Time Credits remains one example of a practical solution to overcome barriers to engagement and support individuals and communities who have limited resources and financial security.

		<p>The introduction of the three Connect Platforms across our region in 2019 allowed us to develop a person to person Time Banking option to support the existing person to organisation Time Bank firmly embedded in Carmarthenshire. Time Credits being where members of the time bank share their time with each other. What is a timebank? - Connect Carmarthenshire</p> <p>Connect Carmarthenshire Connect Carmarthenshire - Supporting Carmarthenshire is an online platform which connects individual and communities and was launched early in 2020 as a result of the need to move services to a digital platform during the initial Covid 19 lockdown. The platform now has over 400 members, 14 teams community teams, 2 campaigns and calls for action, direct links to co-production and connect to kindness and over 40 activities and is growing day by day. Plans are afoot to expand the Time Credit scheme, including initiatives to increase awareness and participation as well as look at the scheme will be locally managed going forward.</p>
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