

Conclusions and Recommendations

A summary of the key evidence presented at each of the inquiry meetings is attached as Appendix 3. In addition a summary of findings for Southampton against the framework for loneliness is attached as Appendix 4. Conclusions were drawn from each meeting and disseminated to the Panel. All of the reports, presentations and minutes from the inquiry meetings can be found here:

<http://www.southampton.gov.uk/modernGov/ieListMeetings.aspx?Committeed=660>

Conclusions

- The inquiry has clearly demonstrated to the Panel that loneliness is a significant issue in Southampton that has devastating and costly impacts for numerous residents, communities and the city as a whole.
- Loneliness is amenable to a number of effective interventions and there are clear incentives, as well as a moral obligation, to take action to address loneliness as combating loneliness can reduce the need for health and care services in the future.
- The Panel were encouraged by the progress made in Southampton to reduce and prevent loneliness, and the variety and diversity of activities and support currently being delivered, predominantly through the voluntary and community sector and the band of volunteers who work tirelessly to support vulnerable residents, to help make connections and bring communities together.
- The Panel are aware that a considerable number of the Loneliness Framework interventions needed in a local area to support people experiencing, or at risk of loneliness, are now in place or are in development, and that when a number of the new initiatives become established and rolled out across the city outcomes will improve.
- The area where the Panel felt most passionately about was the importance of strengthening neighbourhoods. Strong communities, looking out and supporting each other will inevitably reduce isolation and loneliness as well as providing numerous other benefits.
- The Panel support the development of the Community Solutions Groups, the proposals to develop a community development service to support voluntary and community organisations, reduce duplication and improve co-ordination, and to increase grant funding available for neighbourhood groups to encourage community led initiatives. Community led solutions offer significant potential to combat loneliness.
- However, Southampton can and must do more to combat loneliness and changes can be made that improve the timeliness of support offered to lonely people and help to prevent vulnerable people from becoming lonely, particularly acutely lonely, in the future.
- A priority must be to reach out more effectively to those who are most isolated and lonely, using and developing the data available and understanding of what causes loneliness, and which transition points can

make people vulnerable, to promote services and target appropriate support when it is required.

- Additionally there is a clear requirement to improve the provision of community focussed information, advice and guidance provided to lonely people and the co-ordination of effort and activity to encourage digital inclusion in Southampton.
- Examples of good practice exist nationally and it is advisable that the Council takes up the invitation from the Campaign to End Loneliness to provide support as Southampton seeks to combat loneliness.
- It is essential that in the drive to combat loneliness the views and opinions of lonely people must be at the heart of any decisions and that consideration should be given to hearing the voice of lonely people throughout the process.
- The findings and recommendations identified during the inquiry are reflected within Southampton Better Care vision; which is to join up care and support for each and every unique person in our city needing our care.

Recommendations

Reflecting the key findings and conclusions the following actions are recommended to combat loneliness in Southampton:

Foundation Services

1. **Southampton index of isolation and loneliness** – Incorporating segmentation data from MOSAIC, build on existing data sources to develop a comprehensive local index of isolation and loneliness that will enable neighbourhoods which have a higher likelihood of having individuals that are socially isolated or lonely to be identified.
2. **Data sharing and targeting support** – To increase the effectiveness of interventions share the index of isolation and loneliness with relevant organisations across Southampton, including the voluntary and community sector and the Council's Digital Transformation Team. This should enable services and prevention activity to be targeted to groups and neighbourhoods that are particularly vulnerable to loneliness.
3. **Transitions and key life events** – There is growing awareness that certain transitions and key life events such as bereavement, motherhood or retirement are risk factors for loneliness. Consideration should be given to the timely support and information that can be provided to residents experiencing these transitions and events to prevent and respond to loneliness.
4. **Southampton Information Directory (S.I.D)** – To maximise the potential of a citywide, but community focussed, information directory, a co-ordinated approach needs to be developed that results in either improvements to the

existing Southampton Improvement Directory so that it is fit for purpose, or the purchasing of an additional platform to meet the needs of the city.

5. **Community Navigation** - Dependent upon the evaluation of the pilot scheme, commission and roll out the Community Navigation Scheme across Southampton to support residents to find the most appropriate support (utilising and updating the S.I.D) and to act as a link between lonely residents, local Community Solutions Groups and statutory services, including GP's.
6. **GENIE** – To help lonely people make new connections and reduce demand for health and care services, develop a plan to implement the GENIE tool across Southampton using trained volunteers and the improved S.I.D.
7. **Communications** – Develop a communications plan to improve awareness of loneliness, both among professionals and older people themselves, and to identify appropriate methods to communicate with lonely people.

Direct Interventions

8. **Befriending Services and Peer Support** – The Panel were informed of the lengthy waiting list for befriending services and peer support in Southampton. Linked to the development in the city to support prevention and early intervention it is recommended that consideration be given to identifying opportunities to increase capacity for the much valued befriending and peer support schemes in Southampton.

Gateway Services

9. **Digital Inclusion** – A Digital Strategy for the Council is currently in development. The Panel recommends that the Council co-ordinates its' approach with partners across the city to support digital inclusion, reduce duplication and target support effectively, utilising the index of social isolation and loneliness, including digital support for communities whose first language is not English.
10. **Community Transport** - The Community Solutions Sub-group are actively considering innovative approaches to the transport needs of people who cannot or find it difficult to use public transport. It is recommended that, if the business planning by the University of Southampton identifies the solution is achievable and sustainable, the Council and partners consider the support that they can offer to help the proposals come to fruition.

Structural Enablers

11. **BME Engagement in Community Solutions Groups** - Seek to engage BME communities and new communities in the local community solutions groups.

12. **Role of Councillors** – Councillors can be key catalysts in bringing communities together. It is recommended that Southampton City Councillors lead by example, alongside local community solutions groups, by actively promoting neighbourliness and community action in their wards.
13. **Matching Students with Lonely Householders in Southampton** - To help solve the problems of affordable accommodation for young people and loneliness, particularly among house owning ‘empty nesters’ or bereaved, explore opportunities to encourage the creation of an organisation that pairs older people with students in Southampton, similar to the [Homeshare](#) scheme operating in Paris.
14. **City Makers** - To encourage more civic pride and volunteers, consideration be given to the idea proposed by Love Southampton of creating ‘City Makers’, similar to the ‘Games Makers’ scheme developed for the London Olympics.

Strategic Direction

15. **Combating Loneliness Plan** - The initiatives and recommendations proposed in this report are more likely to be effective if they are built into an overarching plan to combat loneliness in Southampton. It is recommended that the plan is owned by the Health and Wellbeing Board and linked to Better Care.
16. **Age Friendly Southampton** – It is evident that Southampton has the potential to become a recognised ‘Age Friendly City’. It is recommended that the Council explores the steps required to become accredited and, if deemed achievable and desirable, commits Southampton to becoming Age Friendly.
17. **Social Impact Bonds** – If progress combating loneliness in Southampton is not being made at the pace required by the Better Care Scheme, it is recommended that the potential to deliver the step change in outcomes through the use of Social Impact Bonds is explored by the Council. (A definition of a Social Impact Bond is found on P48)
18. **Evidence what success looks like** – To enable effective monitoring of progress it is appropriate that a mechanism is developed by which success in combating loneliness can be measured against.