



Derby City Council

COUNCIL CABINET
10 June 2015

Report of the Cabinet Member for Integrated
Health and Care

ITEM 8

Tackling social isolation and loneliness faced by older people

SUMMARY

- 1.1 On 22nd January 2014 Council Cabinet agreed to launch a review to establish progress in tackling social isolation and loneliness faced by some older people in Derby. The following report summarises the findings of that review.
- 1.2 In April 2015 Council Cabinet agreed the Council's strategy for adult social care: "YourLife, YourChoice—building sustainable care and support in Derby". Tackling social isolation and loneliness is essential to building sustainable care and support and ensuring good outcomes for Derby's most vulnerable adults.
- 1.3 National research underlines that loneliness and isolation should not be regarded as inevitable by-products of ageing. The great majority of Derby's older people are not socially isolated and many bring a considerable personal contribution to their communities, alleviating loneliness both for themselves and others.
- 1.4 The contribution of older people has always been essential in Derby's many communities, especially through helping support their most vulnerable members. Therefore the Council's role in tackling social isolation and loneliness can be seen to have two important dimensions:
 - 1.4.1. Helping older people feel welcomed and included in their local community, and valued for the contribution that they can make.
 - 1.4.2. Ensuring older people have access to a range of support that helps them to live the life they want and remain a contributing member of their community regardless of their age or impairment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 To note the progress that this Council has made in engaging with Derby's older people and reducing social isolation and loneliness since Council Cabinet launched a review of this important national issue in January 2014.
- 2.2 To agree the expansion of neighbourhood services for older people with social care needs, in particular the growth of the Council's Shared Lives service which was developed after listening to the priorities and preferences of local older and disabled people.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Older people are the lifeblood of the city in many important respects. They contribute extensively to both family and community life. It is vital that the Council enables as many older people as possible to continue to do this, both because older people themselves deserve this support and recognition and because Derby will always need their wisdom, compassion and energy.
- 3.2 New generations have changing expectations about the ways they need to be supported should they develop complex physical or mental health problems such as dementia. The Council should respond to this by developing new forms of support, such as Local Area Coordination and the Shared Lives service, that help older people stay active and engaged within their local communities.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

4.0 The background to this review

- 4.1 The report considered by Council Cabinet on 22nd January 2014 acknowledged that loneliness and social isolation are significant risks for some older people. Isolation creates a poor quality of life for the affected person and also poor outcomes for communities that are deprived of their positive contribution. Ultimately, loneliness and social isolation can also have consequences for the Council and other statutory partners. For example, social isolation may lead to some older people developing social care needs that the Council has a legal responsibility to meet.
- 4.2 The report also highlighted that factors causing isolation are often different for each individual older person. Research suggests an interrelationship between isolation and a range of other health and well-being factors. Therefore the best way to tackle loneliness for an individual older person is to understand the situation pertinent to them, which may be rooted in physical or mental decline, inaccessible housing, bereavement or a combination of other factors. This in turn means that the “solution” for the older person might be found in a range of different responses, perhaps hosted by the Council, or led by the NHS, or a housing provider, or a community organisation. Understanding the issues for each isolated older person involves making specific contact with them and listening. This is not a job for any single organisation and can only be delivered by partnerships between the Council, the huge range of other organisations in Derby supporting older people, and communities themselves.
- 4.3 The above points informed the way the Council’s review was undertaken. It was essential that the review understood and sought to build on both the views and the many strengths of Derby’s older people.

5.0 Listening to feedback from Derby’s older people

- 5.1 Significant consultation has been carried out both with respect to this review and the “Your Life Your Choice” strategy that was approved by Council Cabinet in April 2015. This has created an understanding what is most important to older people themselves in terms of connecting with other people and continuing to lead a happy and stimulating life.

- 5.2 For example, a cross-section of 66 older people from across Derby were consulted in a workshop entitled “Living Well In Later Life” and additional older people were consulted in various locations. Several key issues and themes emerged from the discussion. Firstly people identified the most popular pastimes that they were involved in to ensure that they remained socially active and busy. The frequency that particular activities were mentioned is represented in Appendix Four. Everyday activities such as walking, volunteering, attending places of worship and seeing friends featured highly.
- 5.3 Older people were also asked to rank areas that they considered to be of most importance for the Council to focus on so that they continued to stay connected with others. Their top five priorities were as follows:
1. Ensure public transport is good so I can get out and about
 2. Help improve information about activities that are going on in my area
 3. Help groups set up and publicise new activities
 4. Make it easier for groups to use community buildings as a base for daytime activities
 5. Ensure local facilities (e.g. libraries, museums, leisure centres) are accessible for me.
- 5.4 These themes continued to resonate in the “Your Life Your Choice” consultation about the Council’s strategy for adult social care.
- 5.4.1 Feedback was given about the need to target people who are at risk of becoming isolated in their own home. If more care is to be delivered at home, there will be a greater need for activity within the community to offset the risk of loneliness.
- 5.4.2 People liked the Council taking an interest in their community and doing things such as Local Area Coordination to build community capacity. There was a recognition that a different approach is needed and that a community focus is the right way forward.
- 5.4.3 There appeared to be a lot of interest and commitment from people to be a part of, and to contribute to, their community. Indeed, many people said that they do already help each other and that many people are active in their community. People also said that they would build relationships, join community groups to avoid isolation, use local resources and offer friendship.
- 5.4.4 Communication was the issue that most people identified as most important to help them to stay independent. This includes help to navigate services, publicising events and creating informal learning opportunities. It also includes supporting people with the means to communicate in the digital age.

5.5 Local consultation with older people has highlighted the strong desire of the vast majority to stay independent and in control of their lives. They overwhelmingly asked the Council to carry out an enabling role as they grew older and (for some) more frail. Enabling them to continue to get out and about. Enabling them to understand what was going on in their area and to connect with it. Enabling them to continue to make a great contribution to the well-being of their families and neighbourhoods. The following paragraphs set out some of the different ways that the Council has been developing services in order to do this.

6.0 **Ensuring access to universal services**

These are services currently available to all of Derby's citizens. The examples listed below show how Derby's universal services have sought to reach out to older people and alleviate loneliness.

6.1 Libraries

At the simplest level, libraries provide a neutral space where an older person can visit. Unlike many other public spaces there are no pressures to buy something or join in an activity. The opportunity is there for someone to sit down quietly and say nothing. Equally, if they wish, individuals can start to talk and engage with others. Customers often build a visit to the library to take out their books into their routine. They enjoy a conversation with staff, who know that for some it may be one of the few human interactions that they have. The library service runs a range of activities and services that support older people:

- **Reading groups** – these now run independently of the service, but libraries provide access to stock and some groups choose to use the library space. These groups are often just as much about meeting other people and networking as they are about books
- **Craft groups** – the library service has facilitated craft groups, encouraging people to meet up and share their knowledge, skill and enthusiasm. These groups are now self-sustaining.
- **Knit and natter** – these are often very popular groups that meet to knit and have a good chat.
- **Using the web to communicate.** Many older people have benefited from library services introductions to the internet which have opened up the possibility of wider communication via the web. The library service still offers free Internet taster sessions, using library ICT equipment and selected volunteers who deliver a pre agreed course.
- **Volunteering opportunities.** The library service offers many volunteering opportunities. This can be assisting at a Homework Club, Job Club, Internet taster session, Story times. It can include general library duties or perhaps working as a volunteer for the Home library service, which is about delivering books to people who are housebound.
- **Activities** – a wide range of activities are promoted on the library web site (www.derby.gov.uk/libraries) and via a booklet called "Whats On". This includes the above but also talks on a wide range of topics, local walks, courses e.g. craft, local and family history, writing.

6.2 Participating in culture and the arts

There is a growing body of scientific evidence as to the positive effects of the arts on physical and mental health and well-being. A recent Evidence Review of the Impact of Participatory Arts on Older People concluded “it is evident that engaging with participatory art can improve the well-being of older people and mediate against the negative effects of becoming older”. (Cutler, D. 2013. *Local Authorities + Older People + Arts = A Creative Combination*. The Baring Foundation). Derby City Council, either through direct provision or via funding partners, support a number of participatory opportunities for older people in culture and the arts.

- Deda run a wide ranging programme of dance classes. These include activity that will appeal to a 50+ age group, such as Ballroom dance classes and Rock ‘n’ Roll and Jive. These activities help people to be active in a fun environment and encourage sociability. Ballroom classes can also give people confidence to attend tea dances such as those run by Derby Live.
- Dance Gold at Deda is a fun, creative and ‘no-pressure’ dance class developed especially for the more mature body. Challenging posture, balance, mobility, strength and coordination through modern dance and creative movement, accompanied by a broad range of music. It allows older people to rekindle a love for dance or try something completely new. A case study is provided in Appendix Three.
- GoldsQUAD aims to improve the happiness and wellbeing of older people in Derby through increased participation in the arts. It is a weekly session at QUAD giving people the opportunity to meet as a social group and create art whilst raising issues around health and wellbeing. Activities have included textiles, photography, film and more craft based arts. The session provides opportunity to develop new skills and revisit past interests.
- Derby Museum schedule activity to make it accessible to older people. This includes exhibition tours and artists talks in the gallery spaces.
- There are a wide range of arts, craft and cultural opportunities available across the city, with over seventy identified that are geared to support older and disabled people. These range from Knit and Natter groups to watercolour painting classes to more specialised arts training and workshops. A number of these are free, others range in price from £2 for a weekly hobby-craft session, up to £30 for a therapeutic arts and crafts session.
- Voluntary sector organisations provide absolutely essential coordination in this area. For example, Age UK in Chaddesden have an established weekly programme of creative activities that are very popular amongst the community. Activities include chair based exercises, art group, Tai Chi and the Rock of All Ages Choir.

- 6.3 There are some excellent case studies in Derby to support the positive impact the above services make to older people. For example:

James attends Dance Gold once or twice a week and likes the social aspect of attending classes at Déda. He says he attends classes also because it helps to improve his balance and his fitness. He says he often goes home after his Ballroom class with a smile on his face.

He says that attending the dance classes gives him something to do and he has made a lot of friends at Déda. He comes early for his classes to have a drink in the Cube Café and chats to the staff, which he says, cheer him up. Since coming to Dance Gold and Ballroom Beginners James has noticed that his self-esteem has been boosted and that he can transfer this to other parts of his life.

Since starting classes at Déda James has started to come to see work in the performance programme as well. James says he enjoys the shows and after being asked to write a blog for Déda's website, he now loves writing about the shows as well.

6.4 Spectating in culture and the arts

Providers in Derby recognise older people as important audiences and gear their programmes accordingly. For example,

- Cultural venues in Derby regularly schedule matinee performances. These are attractive to older audiences as they overcome concerns some will have about coming to the city centre at night. Ticket prices for these shows are often also discounted.
- QUAD have a regular matinee screening slot called the Midweek Treat. This is an afternoon screening of a new release film with an introduction to the topics and issues that it is exploring.
- Derby Live actively programme nostalgia style shows such as "We'll Meet Again" that are directly aimed at an older audience.
- QUAD also regularly screen live performances from the National Theatre and Royal Shakespeare Company. These screenings make national theatre works available to people who do not have the mobility to travel long distances to see productions.

6.5 Participating in physical activity

Active Living at Derby City Council leisure facilities are aimed at older people. Activities available include swimming, badminton, short-mat bowls, sequence dancing, keep fit and group exercise classes. Prices are subsidised and activities take place across the three Derby City Council Leisure Facilities. Sessions are designed with the following benefits in mind:

- increased energy levels and improved sleep;
- helping to maintain a healthy weight
- protecting the heart and improving circulation
- strengthening muscles, joints and bones
- helping with mobility and balance.

There are also positive wellbeing outcomes from the programme that come from connecting with other people, increasing sociability and improving self-esteem.

7.0 **Strengthening neighbourhoods**

This is support that is provided specifically to given localities, recognising that building stronger neighbourhoods is critical to enabling Derby's residents feel safe, healthy and able to make a positive contribution. Again, Derby's neighbourhood services have a significant impact upon older people living locally.

7.1 Neighbourhood services

Derby City Council has committed to working with local people to tackle the issues that matter to them on their doorstep. This is being achieved through a neighbourhood management model and offers opportunities for people of all ages to get involved. Neighbourhood management is enabled by an allocated Council officer in each neighbourhood and provides an infrastructure to support elected members in their community leadership role. In practice, many of the neighbourhood boards and forums described below draw heavily on the engagement and commitment of local older people. The neighbourhood structure provides an opportunity for older people to feel more connected with what is going on around them. Several neighbourhoods have also actively decided to focus on the support needs of local older people when setting their priorities. Opportunities for involvement include:

- **Neighbourhood Forums** – these are open public meetings for all local residents, community organisations and businesses, chaired by a local ward councillor. Every electoral ward in Derby has at least one Neighbourhood Forum held at a local venue every two or three months. The forum is residents' opportunity to find out what is happening locally - the problems and the successes - and to discuss the big issues and priorities. Residents have the chance to talk to councillors, local police and other providers of services and have a say about what the priorities should be for their neighbourhood.
- **Neighbourhood Boards** – these are the main leadership groups for the neighbourhood and offer people to get involved in their neighbourhood as community leaders, working alongside their councillors and local services. The Board agrees the priorities for the neighbourhood, decides where delegated Council budgets are to be spent, monitors performance, influences decisions that reflect the views of local residents, and decides on the vision for each neighbourhood. Again these meet every two to three months.
- Further information can be obtained by visiting <http://www.derby.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/neighbourhood-partnerships/>

7.2 Local Area Co-ordination

Local Area Coordination works on the basis that the “solution” to loneliness and isolation is often found not through conventional services but by supporting vulnerable people to build and widen the informal network of relationships and support found within their local community. Case studies from Derby are set out in Appendix Two. Local Area Coordination is built on the assumption that people who may be vulnerable are not just “passive recipients” of social and health care, but have expertise, gifts and strengths that can help them achieve their vision for a good life and contribute to their local communities. By supporting isolated people to develop new relationships and by introducing new activities Local Area Coordinators support them to get a life not a service. The Local Area Coordination team has been in place for the last two years working in two wards (Alvaston and Arboretum) to identify and support vulnerable adults helping them to build a plan that develops their resilience, promotes better personal outcomes and reduces demand on more formal services. Over 2014-15 this team has expanded to include a further five wards (Sinfen, Derwent, Darley, Normanton and Abbey) with a further three wards (Chaddesden, Boulton and Mackworth) coming on line in 2015-16 which will bring the total to ten. Local Area Coordinators work to support people to:

- Think about their vision for a good life and take time to talk and think about what would make life better
- Identify their strengths, skills and gifts including finding volunteering opportunities
- Access a range of information
- Develop relationships and community networks, both meeting new people and connecting with old friends
- Get their voice heard by providing help to speak to services and professionals
- Take actions to make their life better by helping to plan practical steps to make changes
- Be more involved in their community by providing information about activities and groups in the local area
- Get the right support from services to live life in the way that they wish to

7.3 Housing initiatives

The Local Area Coordination team are currently working with Derby Homes to make the most of the 23 community rooms they have dotted across the city. At present a number of rooms have been identified as being underused. Over recent months Local Area Coordinators have worked with community members to set up regular coffee mornings in these rooms with support from Derby Homes colleagues.

7.4 Derby Homes Intensive Housing Management Scheme has been developed to provide a pro-active service for elderly and vulnerable tenants. The service focuses on tenants being able to remain in independent living within their communities, and builds on day support opportunities to help enable this.

8.0 Shared Lives: supporting older people with eligible social care needs

Derby City Council has been exploring new ways of meeting the day support needs of older people with the most complex physical and mental health conditions. The traditional approach to meeting these needs has been by asking them to attend a day centre. However, a number of older people have clearly said that, whatever their impairment, their preference is to continue to pursue activities that are familiar to them in their local communities. This has especially been true for older people with dementia who can find it very difficult to make the transition to a day centre in an unfamiliar part of town with a large number of people around them who they do not know. Having listened to this, Derby City Council has been developing a service that will meet these needs while also supporting family carers who need the time and space to take a regular break.

- 8.1 The service that Derby City Council has developed is called Shared Lives. It is based on matching the older person with a Shared Lives carer, somebody who has not only been trained to provide excellent quality care and support but who also can develop a strong relationship with the older person based on shared interests, sense of humour and personality. The service is registered with the Care Quality Commission and has to meet strict inspection standards.
- 8.2 “Shared Lives” is a fitting description of the service in that the Shared Lives carer provides support inside their own home (offering an opportunity for the older person to visit somebody who they come to regard as a friend) as well as accessing community opportunities. The case examples set out in Appendix Three show how this has benefitted a cross-section of older people in Derby.
- 8.3 A Shared Lives arrangement is based on the active consent of all those involved. The person using the service makes choices about their care and their carers. The person and the Shared Lives’ carers are carefully ‘matched’ to ensure everyone involved in the arrangement feels comfortable and supported.
- 8.4 As well as day support, Shared Lives offers alternatives for older people to take overnight breaks with their Shared Lives carer, or even live with them long-term. This means that Shared Lives is able to flex with the changing needs of both the older person themselves and their family carers.
- 8.5 The Shared Lives service continues to grow, and work continues to explore expanding the offer to more older people and people with dementia, as an alternative to other forms of support such as attending day centres or having sitting services. Feedback from people using the service shows that this more personalised, one-to-one support is very beneficial in reducing distress and anxiety both for the individual and their family carers.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 9.1 Doing nothing would risk poor outcomes for some older people whose loneliness and risk of isolation could be tackled by appropriate partnership work between the Council, other organisations and local communities.

This report has been approved by the following officers:

Legal officer Financial officer Human Resources officer Estates/Property officer Service Director(s) Other(s)	Anita Barnett Toni Nash Liz Moore
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IMPLICATIONS

Financial and Value for Money

- 1.1 Ensuring older people who might otherwise feel lonely or isolated get access to appropriate support is a very good use of Council resources. As mentioned in the main report, there is robust national evidence that older people who become lonely or isolated can deteriorate in both physical and mental function more rapidly than would otherwise have been the case. This triggers statutory social care responsibilities that are likely to be more cost-intensive than would otherwise have been the case.
- 1.2 Any financial pressures would be subject to identifying an appropriate budget and obtaining the required approval.

Legal

- 2.1 None arising from this report.

Personnel

- 3.1 None arising from this report

Equalities Impact

- 4.1 The Council's recent and planned work to reduce social isolation and loneliness for older people will have a positive equalities impact because it helps address negative assumptions about ageing that can often result in negative outcomes. In fact, as laid out in the main body of this report, older people continue to have huge amounts to offer their communities and a small amount of help will have a great benefit both to the older person themselves and to those around them.
- 4.1 Members from both the 50 plus Forum and Older People's Forum take part in the Council's Equality Impact Assessments, adding well informed quality to the meetings.
- 4.2 The focus of this year's Council event to mark International Day against Homophobia and Transphobia was around equality issues for older LGBT people and managers were invited to attend a presentation in the Council Chamber facilitated by Derbyshire Friend

Health and Safety

- 5.1 None arising from this report

Environmental Sustainability

- 6.1 None arising from this report

Property and Asset Management

7.1 None arising from this report

Risk Management

8.1 None arising from this report

Corporate objectives and priorities for change

- 9.1 Tackling loneliness and isolation will support good health and well-being for older people in Derby, in particular:
- More people living longer in better health.
 - Better mental health and well-being.

CASE STUDIES FROM LOCAL AREA CO-ORDINATION

Through developing the Local Area Coordination team over the last two years the team have found that the best way to explain they work is through case studies.

Joan

Joan is a 72 year old widow. Following the death of her husband two years ago Joan started to feel isolated and alone, this in turn started to have an impact on her mental and physical wellbeing. When a referral came in to adult social care, she was assessed for some equipment to help with her visual impairment, given some information about residential care and day services and introduced to the LAC (Local Area Coordinator).

Over a number of visits the LAC spent time getting to know Joan, they talked about the things she wanted from life and they talked about the things that worried her, but the majority of the conversations focused on Joan's gifts, skills and interests. Joan talked about the fact that she felt very lonely and so together they drew up a plan of action to address this. They looked at things that Joan could do by herself, things they would look at together and things that Joan wanted the LAC to tackle.

The LAC then worked with Joan to connect in to local activities and develop relationships with neighbours at a pace that was comfortable and made sense...a mixture of trying new things, and reconnecting with old ones.

Joan now attends a 'knit and natter' session in the local library and has been introduced to neighbours who shares her passion for antiques and who are more than willing to welcome her on their "antique hunts". The LAC supported Joan to reconnect with her local church where she now goes every week. Joan's next door neighbour is helping to with managing her bins and reads letters for her as and when required, in return Joan happily takes deliveries for them when they are at work.

The LAC still calls in on Joan every month for a cup of tea and a chat and Joan is happy to know that they are still around.

Kate and Jean

Kate and Jean are older people who met at a citizen leadership course sponsored by the Council. Some time later they were invited to join the Local Area Coordination team and others in their community to map the strengths and assets of their local neighbourhood. This involved looking at their local community with new eyes, ask new questions and talking to new people. Both Kate and Jean soon realised that there was much about their local community that they didn't know, particularly when it came to things to do.

As a result of this work Kate and Jean decided to join up with a few more of their neighbours to set up a local residents' association. They were supported to apply for a small amount of funding and have used the information collected through their

asset mapping to make the community they live in a better place – they have already set up local coffee mornings, knit and natter sessions and a local carers group and have plans over the next few months to start a casserole club.

Jim

Jim was discharged from hospital back into his own home after undergoing some significant surgery. He was introduced to his Local Area Coordinator because hospital workers had concerns about him coping at home alone. Jim's family lived some distance away and had lost touch with Jim since his wife passed away a few years before.

The LAC took time getting to know Jim and building a trusting relationship, after a couple of visits Jim asked for the LAC to support him to get on top of his house and garden. Together they talked to his family, friends and neighbours developing a plan of action that moved Jim closer to the life he wanted to lead. His family helped Jim sort the inside of his house and a group of "good neighbours", helped sort his garden. The LAC helped Jim make contact with more specialist services and with the help of the Healthy Housing Hub; he now has heating and a functioning bathroom. As a result of their work together Jim is also more engaged with his community picking up old friendships and being introduced to new people.

Jim recently got a new TV and asked the LAC to help him find someone who might benefit from his old one. As a result the LAC introduced Jim to Paul who has a really grateful recipient of the TV. In return for the TV Paul now helps Jim stay on top of his gardening.

Aiza

Aiza was introduced to the LAC by her GP. She had suffered a stroke and was struggling on a number of different fronts. Following a long conversation with the LAC they decided to prioritise three things – getting help to get dressed in the morning, meal preparation and rebuilding her self-confidence.

The LAC contacted the local social services team on Aiza's behalf and supported her when a worker went out to assess her. They then sat together to think about how best to achieve all the things she wanted. This involved a mixture of support from neighbours, voluntary community organisations and paid support, all delivered within Aiza's local community. As a result of this work Aiza is now more engaged with her neighbours and feels more able to cope in her own home.

Mary, Betty and friends.

Whilst walking around their area, the LAC came across a group of six women of retirement age who were all waiting outside a local pub. They were all residents of a local sheltered housing scheme and had arranged with the landlord to have a coffee morning in the pub.

The LAC seized the opportunity to talk to the group about the work they were doing in the neighbourhood and asked if there was anything they could do to help. The group talked about the fact that they wanted to share their group with other isolated

people in the community and asked the LAC to let others know. They also talked about the fact that they would like to do more.

Five months on and the group now regularly attracts 30 people, they have done a deal with the landlady who provides on a meal at lunchtime for them at a significantly reduced cost. One of the group has arranged for someone to come in and run an armchair exercise class after lunch. This now means that they have a full day of activities, all organised by neighbours looking out for neighbours.

June

June was introduced to the LAC by the Care Coordinator based in a local GP practice. June had just lost her husband and was feeling isolated and a little depressed; this had resulted in her regular attendance at the GP practice. The LAC met with June and talked about her concerns, passions and interests. After a couple of sessions the LAC asked June if she could bring someone along with her, Hilda. At their first meeting June and Hilda hit it off immediately, they talked about their shared love of “charity shop hunting” and arranged to meet up the following week. The LAC has very little to do with June or Hilda or the last few months they are too busy out and about.

Ethel and Phil

Ethel made contact with the LAC after finding a leaflet at the GP surgery. Ethel’s original request was for some support to deal with some big metal doors she had in her garden that needed scrapping. As the conversation developed Ethel talked about the fact that she had recently lost her husband of many years to cancer and was struggling to cope with life by herself. After a long conversation over the phone they agreed that the LAC should visit Ethel at home to talk about the things that they could help her with.

On meeting Ethel, it was evident that she was a very sharp articulate lady who was struggling to manage life on her own. Ethel was dealing with a number of physical health issues on top of her bereavement and as a result her concerns about her garden had tipped the balance. This had resulted in Ethel making weekly contact with her GP surgery through anxiety related issues and a significant drop in her self-confidence.

From a Local Area coordination point of view it is really important to be able to demonstrate that we will follow through on actions agreed with the people we support as this build trust and a sense of moving forward. Therefore that week the LAC arranged to have the iron gates removed from the property and supported Ethel to manage this removal.

The LAC then spent a number of visits helping Ethel to think about prioritising things that would help her feel more in control of her life. Ethel’s husband had been a very practical man and the garden had been their pride and joy, therefore getting the garden back into some sort of order became the priority for Ethel and the LAC.

They made contact with the Council who came and cleared her garden of bulky waste. They also worked together to sell some of the highly specialist tools that lay unused in her garage, tools that could be sold and the money put to good use by her.

They then began to think about how Ethel could begin to feel less isolated. Ethel is not a coffee morning's sort of person, gardening is her passion and she is quite knowledgeable about flora and fauna, however given her mobility issues managing her garden had become increasingly difficult to manage

The LAC decided to introduce Ethel to one of the other people she had been supporting, a man called Phil in his mid-thirties who was looking for opportunities to volunteer in his local area.

The LAC talked about this opportunity with Ethel and Phil and introduced the two one day over a coffee in the local library. At this meeting it was agreed that Phil would be more than willing to give some of his time in helping Ethel with her garden as he felt it was quite therapeutic for him.

During his first few visits the LAC spent time with both Phil and Ethel in the garden to check that all was well and then slowly left them to it. They got on like a house on fire with Phil happily chipping away at Ethel's garden whilst Ethel had some good company, and was able to pass on her knowledge of plants.

Some weeks on the LAC will occasionally pop round to see Ethel and Phil when they are in the garden together; this introduction has proved to be a real win for both parties. Phil has an outlet for his excess energy and Ethel has some company plus the benefit of having her garden cleared at no more a cost than a few cups of coffee and biscuits.

CASE STUDIES FROM SHARED LIVES

These are real Shared Lives customers in Derby whose names have been changed. They show how the Council's Shared Lives team can help older people with quite high needs, including those living with dementia, to pursue everyday activities that would otherwise have been lost to them.

Beryl

Beryl was referred to the Scheme as her husband was struggling to offer her 24/7 support with her dementia. Beryl's husband couldn't go into the garden without her becoming anxious and nervous about being left alone. Beryl's husband was becoming socially isolated due to the high support requirements of his wife.

One of the Scheme's Shared lives carers who had worked with people with Dementia was matched to Beryl. A number of visits was organised so that Beryl could become familiar with the carer and build a regular pattern that supported Beryl and her carer. Initially the support was provided in Beryl's home but gradually this has now moved to the support being offered during the day at the Shared Lives Carer's home.

Beryl now looks forward to the Shared Lives Carer visiting and says: "When is my friend coming?" Beryl's husband stated that the support had exceeded his expectations. He is now able to do the gardening and has been able to meet up with friends knowing his wife is supported and happy.

Ruth

Ruth's sister made a referral to Shared Lives for support. A Shared Lives carer was introduced to Ruth and she went to stay with the Shared Lives Carer during the day, allowing Ruth's sister to go to work and maintain her own family home. The Shared Lives Carer worked with the sister to provide the support in line with her work pattern.

The Shared Lives Carer has now supported Ruth to move to her own flat in a warden controlled complex.

Terry

Terry lived independently in his own home but was diagnosed with dementia and became socially isolated. He could not go out, meet his usual friends and carry out the activities he enjoyed.

Terry was referred to Shared Lives and was introduced to a Shared Lives carer who had similar interests and lived nearby. With the support of his Shared Lives carer Terry was able to meet up with friends and get out and about.

Terry's sister said "My brother needed more support and his dementia made it difficult for him to get out in the community. When his Shared Lives carer started calling round and taking him out it was as though he had a new lease of life. He met up with old friends at the local shop and this meant so much to him. It really brought him out of himself".

ENGAGEMENT WITH OLDER PEOPLE: WORD CLOUD

This diagram represents the words that older people most often used when they were asked about the activities that they personally undertook to prevent loneliness and isolation.

