

Report of the Chief Executive

LONELINESS AND SOCIAL ISOLATION1. Purpose of report

To advise Committee of projects and organisations which are tackling loneliness and social isolation in the borough.

2. Detail

Loneliness has been defined as the subjective, unwelcome feeling of lack or loss of companionship. It happens when we have a mismatch between the quantity and quality of social relationships that we have, and those that we want (Perlman and Peplau,1981) Loneliness is never desired and lessening these feelings can take a long time.

According to a paper produced by Care Connect at the University of Sheffield in 2018, it is important to point out the differences between loneliness and social isolation. Social isolation is an objective measure of the number of contacts that people have. It is about the quantity and not quality of relationships. People may choose to have a small number of contacts. When they feel socially isolated, this can be overcome relatively quickly by increasing the number of people they are in contact with.

Loneliness and social isolation are different but related concepts. Social isolation can lead to loneliness and loneliness can lead to social isolation. Both may also occur at the same time. Loneliness and social isolation also share many factors that are associated with increasing the likelihood of people experiencing each, such as deteriorating health, and sensory and mobility impairments. Long-term loneliness is associated with an increased risk of certain mental health problems, including depression, anxiety and increased stress.

Social isolation and loneliness also lead to higher rates of premature mortality comparable to those associated with smoking and alcohol consumption – around 30 per cent higher than for the general population (Holt-Lunstad J, Smith TB, Baker M, Harris T, Stephenson D. Loneliness and social isolation as risk factors for mortality: a meta-analytic review. *Perspect Psychol Sci.* 2015).

Some details of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on loneliness and social isolation are contained in Appendix 1. Appendix 2 gives brief details of some of the agencies and services which are available to offer help and support in Broxtowe.

Recommendation

The Committee is asked to NOTE the report.

Background papers

Nil