



Council Offices, Almada Street
Hamilton, ML3 0AA

Tuesday, 08 June 2021

Dear Councillor

Equal Opportunities Forum

The Members listed below are requested to attend a meeting of the above Forum to be held as follows:-

Date: Wednesday, 16 June 2021

Time: 14:00

Venue: By Microsoft Teams,

The business to be considered at the meeting is listed overleaf.

Yours sincerely

Cleland Sneddon
Chief Executive

Members

Bert Thomson (Chair), Janine Calikes, Maureen Devlin, Mary Donnelly, Eric Holford, Ann Le Blond, Martin Lennon, Katy Loudon, Joe Lowe, Jim McGuigan

Substitutes

Maureen Chalmers, Peter Craig, Lynne Nailon, Mo Razzaq, Margaret B Walker, Jared Wark

BUSINESS

- 1 **Declaration of Interests**
- 2 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting** 3 - 6
Minutes of the meeting of the Equal Opportunities Forum held on 31 March 2021 submitted for approval as a correct record. (Copy attached)

Item(s) for Consideration

- 3 **Annual Report on Mainstreaming Equalities and Diversity – Social Work Resources** 7 - 16
Report dated 14 April 2021 by the Head of Children and Justice Services and Chief Social Work Officer. (Copy attached)
- 4 **See Hear Framework**
Presentation by S McGuigan, Planning and Development Officer, Social Work Resources
- 5 **Seniors Together ‘Use it or Lose it’ Project** 17 - 20
Report dated 1 June 2021 by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources). (Copy attached)

Urgent Business

- 6 **Urgent Business**
Any other items of business which the Chair decides are urgent.

For further information, please contact:-

Clerk Name: Elizabeth-Anne McGonigle

Clerk Telephone: 01698 454521

Clerk Email: elizabeth-anne.mcgonigle@southlanarkshire.gov.uk

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FORUM

2

Minutes of meeting held via Microsoft Teams on 31 March 2021

Chair:

Councillor Bert Thomson

Councillors Present:

Councillor Janine Calikes, Councillor Mary Donnelly, Councillor Eric Holford, Councillor Katy Loudon, Councillor Jim McGuigan, Councillor Mo Razzaq (*substitute for Councillor Martin Lennon*), Councillor Margaret B Walker (*substitute for Councillor Maureen Devlin*)

Councillors' Apologies:

Councillor Maureen Devlin, Councillor Ann Le Blond, Councillor Martin Lennon, Councillor Joe Lowe

Attending:

Finance and Corporate Resources

A Bell, Personnel Officer; G Bhatti, Employee Development and Diversity Manager; C Lyon, Administration Officer, E A McGonigle, Administration Officer; K McVeigh, Head of Personnel Services,

Housing and Technical Resources

J Fernie, Homelessness and Housing Support Manager; A Muir, Strategy and Policy Officer

1 Declaration of Interests

No interests were declared.

2 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting of the Equal Opportunities Forum held on 11 November 2020 were submitted for approval as a correct record.

The Forum decided: that the minutes be approved as a correct record.

3 Annual Report on Mainstreaming Equalities and Diversity – Housing and Technical Resources

A report dated 3 March 2021 by the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted on work being undertaken by Housing and Technical Resources to meet the commitments of the “South Lanarkshire Working for You” Mainstreaming Equalities Report 2017 to 2021.

During 2019/2020, the Resource completed a total of 11 Equality Impact Assessments covering the following areas:-

- ◆ 7 Local Letting Initiatives
- ◆ establishment of a target for Wheelchair Accessible Housing Targets
- ◆ Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy 2019 to 2023
- ◆ Gypsy/Traveller Pitch Allocation Policy
- ◆ Rent Management Policy

Details were provided on the strategic and operational work being undertaken or planned by the Resource under the following headings:-

- ◆ Home+ new build housing programme
- ◆ adaptations programme
- ◆ wheelchair accessible housing targets
- ◆ South Lanarkshire Strategic Commissioning Plan 2019 to 2022
- ◆ South Lanarkshire Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan 2019 to 2024
- ◆ Syrian Refugee Resettlement Programme
- ◆ gypsy/travellers
- ◆ translation and interpretation services
- ◆ consultation, engagement and customer feedback
- ◆ employee training and development

The Resource had revised service delivery arrangements to support all customer groups and helping to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on potentially vulnerable individuals and groups had been a focus of attention during 2020/2021. The Resource Equality and Diversity Co-ordinating Group (EDCG) continued to oversee the work in relation to mainstreaming across the Resource during 2020/2021 and the impact of COVID-19 was a key focus for their workplan.

The Chair, on behalf of the Forum members, welcomed the report and expressed appreciation of the work and activities being undertaken by Housing and Technical Resources to take forward the Council's commitment to mainstreaming equality and diversity in strategic planning and performance.

The Forum decided: that the report be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 30 October 2019 (Paragraph 3)]

4 Throughcare and After Care Housing Services Role

J Fernie, Homelessness and Housing Support Manager, Housing and Technical Resources gave a presentation on the role of throughcare and after care housing services.

The presentation provided detailed information on the following key areas:-

- ◆ the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill which ensured children's rights were respected and protected in the law in Scotland and that public authorities were legally required to respect and protect children's rights in the work they did
- ◆ partnership working and the Children's Services Partnership Governance structure
- ◆ the role of Housing and details of Housing Services
- ◆ the focus for Housing including a dedicated locality housing officer and regular liaison meetings with Social Work
- ◆ housing options considerations
- ◆ the accommodation pathway adopted for all children in care
- ◆ housing options and examples
- ◆ performance highlights for 2018/2019 and 2019/2020
- ◆ future priorities

J Fernie, having responded to members' questions, was thanked for her informative presentation.

The Forum decided: that the presentation be noted.

5 Item of Urgent Business– Equity Working Group Update

It was agreed that Councillor Razzaq, as Chair of the Equity Working Group, would provide an update on the work of the Group to date. The Group had proactively considered and discussed:-

- ◆ the Council's recruitment process
- ◆ recruitment of Black and Asian Minority Ethnic (BAME) candidates
- ◆ results from the BAME recruitment survey
- ◆ positive action versus positive discrimination

Discussion at the Group's meeting to be held on 26 April 2021 would include:-

- ◆ equalities training for employees and elected members
- ◆ feedback from focus groups involving participants from the BAME recruitment survey
- ◆ update from the recent public sector summit on race and employment

A discussion took place on the importance of fully understanding the reasons why the Council's recruitment statistics continued to show disparities between the success rates of applicants of white ethnicity and BAME applicants. A similar disparity was also shown in the statistics for disabled candidates and those matters would be fully discussed at future meetings of this Forum.

The Forum decided: to note the position.

Report

Report to:	Equal Opportunities Forum
Date of Meeting:	16 June 2021
Report by:	Head of Children and Justice Services and Chief Social Work Officer

Subject:	Annual Report on Mainstreaming Equalities and Diversity – Social Work Resources
----------	--

1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- advise the Forum of the strategic and operational work being undertaken by Social Work Resources to meet the commitments in the Council's Equal Opportunities Policy and related statutory duties.

2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. The Forum is asked to approve the following recommendation(s):-

- (1) that the work being undertaken by Social Work Resources in terms of the Council's Equal Opportunities Policy and related statutory duties be noted.

3 Background

3.1. The statutory framework for social work services is contained in a raft of different pieces of legislation. Principal among these is the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 which places a duty on all local authorities to "promote social welfare". Social workers have a distinctive set of knowledge, skills and values when supporting our most vulnerable people.

3.2. In giving some additional background, many of the services that are delivered to the public are set out in statute and, therefore, the majority of direct service delivery has to comply with the respective legislative framework. This legislative framework is both complex and ever changing and requires Social Work Resources to manage and change service delivery in line with new requirements. However, it is this framework that provides the basis of Social Work service, in that the key focus is to promote social welfare and provide effective care to meet the needs of vulnerable people in South Lanarkshire. Therefore, as a targeted service, much of the work centres on the following areas:-

- ♦ child protection
- ♦ children with additional support needs
- ♦ Looked After Children
- ♦ adult support and protection
- ♦ mental health
- ♦ alcohol and substance misuse

- ◆ physical and learning disability
- ◆ frail older people
- ◆ people who become involved in the justice system
- ◆ unpaid carers

3.3. The nature of social work means that much of our core business supports people whom are specifically mentioned under legislation and defined within the Equality Act 2010 as nine named protected characteristics groups. The protected characteristic groups of age, disability and gender are the focus of social work activity. The Resource continues to build on previous achievements and remains committed to supporting the Council's Equal Opportunities Policy and related policies, procedures and equality schemes.

3.4. Social Work Resources has worked with other Resources to develop equality outcomes to meet the general duty as set out in the Equality Act 2010:-

- ◆ to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation people who become involved in the justice system
- ◆ advance equality of opportunity
- ◆ foster good relations in all the work we do

This has been published in the Mainstreaming Equalities Report 2013-2017, and updated with a progress report and outcomes report 2017 to 2021.

[Mainstreaming Equalities progress report 2013-2017 and Outcomes report 2017-2021](#)

3.5. This Annual Report on Mainstreaming Equalities and Diversity 2019/2020 report does not detail all activities carried out by Social Work Resources that relate to the equalities agenda. Rather we have selected some highlights from our core business that illustrates the way in which the equalities agenda is embedded into our work and our approach to continuous improvement.

3.6. This report has been aligned to the Mainstreaming Equality Outcomes for 2017 to 2021 which has been revised to reflect the refreshed Council Plan. There are a total of nine Equality Outcomes. This report relates to the outcomes appropriate to social work of: (1) Outcome 1 - Improve services for older people, (2) Outcome 2 - Protect vulnerable children, young people and adults, (3) Outcome 5 - Tackle disadvantage and deprivation and support aspiration, (4) Outcome 8 – Encourage participation in physical and cultural activities and (5) Outcome 9 - Provide vision and strategic direction. A range of activity is listed in Appendix 1. The outcomes above will be aligned to the new outcomes within the Council Plan Connect 2017 to 2022.

3.7. A new Mainstreaming Equality Report and revised outcomes has now been developed for 2021 to 2025. Social Work Resources will lead on Equality Outcome 5 **Improve Health, Care and Wellbeing for the most vulnerable in our communities** incorporating the following actions to achieve:-

- ◆ advance the Care facilities programme
- ◆ redesign community support services for adults and older people
- ◆ continue to support carer, continue to care in good health and wellbeing
- ◆ protect front line staff and carers with access to Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- ♦ manage the (hosting) transition of Mental Health Services (Nursing and Physiotherapy Services from the North Health and Social Care Partnership to the South Health and Social Care Partnership

The report is published here:-

Mainstreaming equalities progress report 2019–2021 and Mainstreaming equalities report 2021-2025

- 3.8. Within the Resource, the Equalities Officer Group has refocused and now links with the Service Performance and Continuous Improvement Group (PCIGs) and the Social Work Resources Governance Group, to ensure equality issues are tabled and discussed when appropriate. PCIGs and the Social Work Governance Group have a role in overseeing the implementation of the Council's statutory duties within the Resource.
- 3.9. Social Work Resources participates in the Council's Equality and Diversity Working Group to facilitate full participation in the Council's wider equality initiatives.
- 3.10. Social Work Resources plays a leading role in a number of partnership agendas including Integration of Health and Social Care, Public Protection Arrangements (Child Protection, Adult Support and Protection, MAPPA (Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements), Getting it Right For Every Child, Carers Strategy, Lanarkshire Advocacy Plan, Gender Based Violence Strategy, Child Protection Committee, Adult Support and Protection Committee and the Community Justice Partnership. Tackling inequality is a central theme within all these partnership agendas.
- 3.11. During March 2020, Social Work Resource service delivery arrangements were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and resulted in revised business operations in response to unprecedented circumstances. Robust resilience arrangements and controls have been put in place to manage the impacts of the pandemic. However, it is recognised that the nature, scale and prolonged period of the issues arising from COVID-19 and its potential impacts present unprecedented challenges.
- 3.12. Social Work Resources alongside other Resources set out its COVID-19 recovery plans in June 2020. COVID-19 legislation and regularly updated guidance has impacted on: easing of assessment and care management arrangements, ceasing operating day care and lifestyles centres and prioritising service delivery. Residential Care for older people has undergone significant transformation to the way that care is delivered due to COVID-19. The Service has had to respond at pace to changing guidance to ensure that all safety measures are in place and that care is delivered to the highest standard.
- 3.13. A PPE hub was set up to manage storage (in conjunction with Housing and Technical Resources), stock control and accountability for personal protective equipment for all staff inhouse services; those private/voluntary and third sector providers; and also unpaid carers and personal assistants.

- 3.14. As restrictions ease, vaccinations and testing increase, we continue to focus on our recovery plan to support those most in need of our care and protection.

4. Equality Impact Assessments

- 4.1. Social Work Resources continues to build upon previous work undertaken in relation to equality and diversity impact assessments resulting in the completion of impact assessments and the identification of new policies, functions and procedures for inclusion in the Relevance Schedule.

- 4.2. Over the course of 2020/2021 the Resource carried out Equality Impact Assessments, which included eight related to the Council's proposed efficiencies and one assessment in relation to policies and plans:

- Financial Savings 2021/2022: Looked after children counselling service
- Financial Savings 2021/2022: Fas Family Support Service
- Financial Savings 2021/2022: Intensive Family Support Services (IFSS)
- Financial Savings 2021/2022: Autism Resource Do ordination Hub Arch
- Financial Savings 2021/2022: Relocation of Family Centres
- Financial Savings 2021/2022: Through Care and Continuing Care Team
- Financial Savings 2021/2022: Day Care Travel Budget
- Financial Savings 2021/2022: Payments to 3rd Sector organisations
- Adult and Older People Day Service Review

- 4.3. The Resource follows corporate guidance for carrying out Equality Impact Assessments. A summary sheet is prepared for each assessment and this allows staff involved in the assessment to note other risks that have been identified as part of the Equality Impact Assessment process. This helps to inform the Resource's approach to risk assessment

5. Employee Implications

- 5.1. Mainstreaming equalities are met from within existing employee resources and that of our partner agencies.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1. There are no additional financial implications associated with this report.

7. Climate Change, Sustainability and Environmental Implications

- 7.1. There are no new climate change, sustainability and environmental implications associated with this report.

8. Other Implications

- 8.1. There are no additional risk implications associated with this report.

- 8.2. There are no other issues associated with this report.

9. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements

- 9.1. This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a change to an existing policy, function or strategy, therefore, no impact assessment is required.

- 9.2. As a result of COVID-19 we have continued engagement with our service users, carers, staff and assisted with wider supports and community responses to the pandemic.

Liam Purdie
Head of Children and Justice Services and Chief Social Work Officer

Date: 14 April 2021

Link(s) to Council Values/Objectives

- Improve later life
- Protecting vulnerable children, young people and adults
- Deliver better health and social care outcomes for all
- Support our communities by tackling disadvantage and deprivation and supporting aspiration

Previous References

- Equal Opportunities Forum - 12 December 2018
- NB. Last Year's report not presented to the Forum due to pandemic

List of Background Papers

- Mainstreaming Equalities (Progress report 2013-2017) (Outcomes report 2017-2021)

Contact for Further Information

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:-

Bernie Perrie, Planning and Performance Manager
Ext: 3447 (Tel: 01698 453749)
Mobile 07795 453 106
E-mail: Bernie.Perrie@southlanarkshire.gov.uk

Appendix 1 – Mainstreaming Equality Outcomes

Social Work Resources Mainstreaming Equality 2020/2021		
1	Outcome 1 – Improve services for Older People	
	What we have done so far	What difference it has made
¹	Provided home care support to 1,160 older people as part of the Supporting Your Independence approach.	Older people are able to remain in their own homes, and supported to continue to be as independent as part of the Supporting Your Independence approach.
²	Provided 278 day care places this includes services delivered by the Day Care Outreach service which was developed in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.	Older people are able to engage in small group settings, participate in a range of stimulating activities, make new friends, and feel less lonely.
³	Provided 123 of our own care home placements and a further 1,743 within the private/voluntary sector care homes.	Older people in need of 24 hour personal care and support are cared for in purpose built homely environments.
⁴	Undertook 2,059 Inquiries for the 65+ age group in Adult Support and Protection resulting in 814 investigations.	Older people are protected from Harm defined to include any conduct which harms or exploits an individual including behaviour towards an adult which causes fear, alarm or distress and may include neglect or self neglect, or physical, psychological, sexual, financial or other abuse.
⁵	Health and Social Care Integration is now established and the Integrated Joint Board (IJB) has representation from carers, service users, and voluntary sector and trade unions.	The IJB has developed its Commissioning Plan ensuring resources are targeted effectively to those most in need.
⁶	PPE HUB ensured provision of Protective Equipment to all services that directly supported vulnerable people.	Reassured those in receipt of services that their care and protection our priority, and that staff felt confident to continue support
2	Outcome 2 – Protect vulnerable children, young people, and adults	
	What we have done so far	What difference it has made
¹	We undertook 893 Inquiries for adults under 65 which led to 347 Adult Support and Protection investigations.	Vulnerable adults are protected from harm.
²	Continue to support 1129 people with a learning disability to live on their own communities.	Supported living arrangements are available to people with learning disabilities, they continue to participate in their communities.
³	Continue to review models of day care support to adults and older people, and delivered outreach models as part of COVID response.	Adults and Older People access more flexible services that reflect their choices around engaging in their community in a safe, meaningful and enjoyable way, within the COVID-19 guidance.
⁴	We undertook 823 Child Protection Investigations.	Children and young people are protected from harm.

5	We placed 267 children on the Child Protection Register, as at 31 March 2020, 103 children were on the Child Protection Register.	Children and young people are protected from harm.
6	We undertook 813 reports for the children through the Children's Hearing System.	Children and young people's wellbeing is addressed as we work to ensure they are safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included.
7	We supported 202 children and young people in full time foster care placements.	Children are cared for in homely environments, and their wellbeing supported by foster parents.
8	The Resource looked after 756 children:- 64% were looked after at home or with friends/relatives 27% were looked after by foster/carers/prospective adopters. 9% were looked after in a residential/ or specialist residential school accommodation.	Vulnerable children and young people are supported in a range of settings as their needs are addressed.
9	Supported a number of Looked after children and care leavers with applying to the EU Settlement Scheme.	Specific Guidance has been published by the Home Office. Social Work Resources have identified children and young people whom the EU Settlement Scheme applies to
10	Self Directed Support (SDS) continues to be implemented, allowing service users choice and control over their care and support arrangements.	<p>Service users are exercising choose with SDS options: Direct Payments – 634 Individual Service Fund – 40</p> <p>Self-directed Support comprises of four funding options:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Direct Payment 2) Individual Service Fund 3) Council arranged services 4) Mixture of funding options <p>Option 3 remains the preferred option for service- users in South Lanarkshire and reflects the national position.</p>
10	We have provided 11,172 items of equipment	Vulnerable adults with physical disabilities are able to remain in their own homes, and supported to continue to be as independent as possible

5 Outcome 5 – Tackle disadvantage and deprivation and support aspiration		
	What we have done so far	What difference it has made
1	Money Matters Advice Service has helped residents of South Lanarkshire to claim over £21.2 million in benefits and over £3.4 million in backdated payments.	Continue to support individuals understand and maximise their DWP (Department of Work and Pensions) benefit entitlement.
2	Continue to support unpaid Carers and young Carers by providing financial support to Lanarkshire Carers, Action for Children, and other partner organisations to assist us deliver on the duties of the Carers (Scotland) Act 2016.	Supports and Services to unpaid carers continue to develop and evolve with our third sector organisations. Unpaid Carers will be better supported on a more consistent basis so that they can continue to care if they so wish, in good health and have a life alongside caring.
3	Continue to provide funding to Lanarkshire Links with other partner organisations in support of service users and carers with mental health concerns.	Service users and carers with mental health concerns are supported in locality based Mental Health issues groups. These groups assist promote mental health, wellbeing and social inclusion within their communities.
4	Continue to implement the Mental Health Strategy	The resource continues to monitor and increase the number of mental health officers in support of this specific protected characteristic.
5	Continue to Implement the Advocacy Plan in relation to the Mental Health Care and Treatment Act (2003). We have produced a new 2020-2025.	Under the Act anyone with a mental disorder has the right to access an independent advocate. An independent advocate is able to give support and help to enable a person to express their own views about their care and treatment. Service users are given a voice. We further plan to Commission refreshed Advocacy Services for 2022
6	The Resource received 5,956 referrals to support people with a physical or sensory impairment.	The Resource continues to support individuals with the protected characteristic of disability remain safe in their own home or homely environment.
7	We have supported 220 people complete a Community Payback order including the opportunity for personal development and learning opportunities. Community projects are improved by those undertaking CPO's	Our Criminal Justice activity seeks to avoid unnecessary short prison sentences of three months or less and continue to support individuals through Community Payback Orders by way of an alternative to custody. Covid Issues have resulted in backlog of CPO's
8	We have prepared 1,023 reports for the Courts.	Reports assist courts in determining the most appropriate disposal to impose on the offender. Covid Issues have resulted in backlog of court hearings.
9	The Resource has received 654 referrals to support individuals improve their substance misuse behaviours with the support of specialist services.	We support, sign post and direct service users with substance misuse problems to our alcohol and drug partnership working arrangements.

8	Outcome 8 – Encourage participation in physical and cultural activities	
	What we have done so far	What difference it has made
¹	We continue in partnership with NHS Lanarkshire to support the development and implementation of integration arrangements for adult health and social care services.	South Lanarkshire Health and Care Partnership have established integrated Joint Board, Performance and Audit Sub Committee and Locality Planning Groups.
²	Getting it Right for South Lanarkshire Children's Governance Structure has been refreshed to reflect support to our most vulnerable groups of children and young people, and a new Children's Services Plan (21/23) has been published.	Supports to children and young people are targeted more efficiently with specific focus on children who are looked after at home, and those with mental health issues.
³	New Carers Support and Services to streamline support for adult carers and young carers are now in place with Lanarkshire Carers and Action for Children the main providers. Services working digitally during COVID-19. Carers being supported with access to PPE, vaccinations, funding and breaks from caring.	Dramatic increase in referrals and supports to carers with new services engaging digitally.
⁴	As part of the development of the Lanarkshire Advocacy Plan we engaged with a range of service users, carers, staff and advocacy providers as part of the plans development	Service users commented positively about the support Advocacy provides for them.
⁵	See Hear Strategy and Action Plan is now well embedded. All information has been made more accessible.	Service users with a sensory impairment can benefit from a wider range of supports and services.
9	Outcome 9 – Provide vision and strategic direction	
	What we have done so far	What difference it has made
¹	The last Social Work equality profile validation exercise records: 1.80% staff declaring they have a disability (SLC 1.65%), 86.62% no disability (SLC 89.33%), 11.58% not declared (SLC 9.02%).	The Resource offers employment opportunity and continues to monitor the workforce.
²	The last Social Work equality profile validation exercise records a gender split of 85.33% (SLC 72.40) female and 14.67% male (SLC 27.60%).	The balance of gender profile across Council Resources differs. Social Work Resources and the care services it provides predominately attract a larger number of female staff.
³	A Joint Inspection of Children's Services concluded with the final report published in April 2020. An improvement action plan has been shared with the Care Inspectorate.	Participation and engagement of staff, parents, carers, children and young people was very positive. Staff are engaged in partnership working. Options appraisal to provide Advocacy for Children on the Child Protection Register being explored.
⁴	Planning for an Adult Support and Protection (ASP) themed inspection.	The Care Inspectorate has indicated they will be inspecting ASP arrangements, the Resource will improve staff knowledge and

		understanding of ASP arrangements by using SNAP survey.
5	A range of transformation change programmes are underway across the resource: Care Facilities Programme; Day Care Review Programme, Home Care Review Programme	Adult and Older Peoples Services will be enhanced to support those most in need of our care and protection.

N.B: Social Work Resources relates to 5 of the 9 Equality outcomes themes. Across these 5 Equality Outcomes a range of example areas of practice are recorded.

Report

5

Report to:	Equal Opportunities Forum
Date of Meeting:	16 June 2021
Report by:	Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources)

Subject:	Seniors Together 'Use it or Lose it' Project
----------	---

1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to: -

- ◆ update the Forum on the development of the Seniors Together 'Use it or Lose it' Project in South Lanarkshire

2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. The Forum is asked to approve the following recommendation(s):-

- (1) that the content of the report be noted.

3. Background

3.1. Population ageing, and the related increase in chronic diseases, is having a major impact on the healthcare systems of most western countries and will be having an even more significant effect in the future.

Chronic diseases could be prevented through healthy diet, avoidance of tobacco products, and regular physical activity. However, when manifested, chronic diseases result in limitation of mobility and physical activity of the affected persons. Usually, the only observable effects are the reduction of the level of autonomy and the loss of mobility.

As a result, monitoring physical activity is a valuable parameter to define if persons are performing enough physical activity in order to prevent chronic disease, or if they are manifesting early symptoms of those diseases.

COVID-19 has exacerbated these issues and has resulted in a backward step for those older people living in South Lanarkshire trying to maintain some level of independence and management of their own health.

Many who had discovered the benefits that are gained from exercising and being in the gym were suddenly now lost with the resultant impact on physical and mental health being very high.

3.2. Members of Seniors Together who regularly attended activity classes set up in conjunction with partners at South Lanarkshire Leisure and Culture (SLLC) began reporting poor mobility and loss of confidence from being at home for such a long period of time.

As well as facilitating older people to access services and opportunities to enhance their retirement, Seniors Together provides ongoing support and engagement with its members using a range of interventions, including more recently social media and technology such as Microsoft Teams, to have ongoing conversations and consultations with them and talking about issues of importance to them including living with long-term illnesses and the impact of Coronavirus.

During recent conversations members highlighted that after being at home in lockdown for so long it was time to take control and look at innovative ways of increasing mobility at home to prevent falls and improve confidence. This would mean that in re-engaging with life after the pandemic they would experience improved health, improved mobility and be resilient as well as independent rather than dependant.

4. Funding

- 4.1. A funding proposal was put together for a small falls prevention pilot and presented to the Safer South Lanarkshire Board. This involved a small study group of participants from Seniors Together and SLLC, who were involved in activity programmes prior to the global pandemic, and who have identified as being less active due to their lockdown situation. These will then be selected to take part in the project called **'Use it or Lose it'**.

We will provide this small group of twenty people with a Wearable Activity Device (a Fitbit) that will prompt them when they have been immobile for too long at home and encourage them to move more and to take part in SLLC guided exercise programmes and classes, online and at home. For participants who do not have a smart phone a Samsung tablet will be provided.

Due to the continuous and regular feedback that is provided by tracking technology, changes in behavioural routines are expected, while increased mobility will lead to improved strength and balance therefore preventing trips and falls and increasing confidence to return to normal routines and classes when they resume.

- 4.2. Participants will be provided with a resource pack of information on guided exercise that they can undertake online and at home.

As we begin to move towards new levels of 'unlocking', participants will be signposted to outdoor activities available within SLLC facilities and in their own localities where they can continue with their activity programme.

Ongoing support with their Wearable Activity Device will be provided by Seniors Together. This will also include a weekly 'Social Session' using Microsoft Teams' so that all participants have the opportunity to come together, meet each other and share their experiences of being part of the study.

Seniors Together has been providing weekly support sessions with other groups in the project since lockdown began and know that it is a practice that works well with this type of project and can assist in keeping people connected and encourage participation.

5. Evaluation

- 5.1. One of the most prominent and frequently cited reasons for mobile physical activity tracking is the expected positive effect on health behaviour and wellbeing. Our aim as part of the project is to record any changes in wellbeing using the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS) to help track any improvements.

In relation to physical changes, we will record baseline information during the first two weeks of the project in relation to the daily step count of each participant and then compare that with data at the end of the project.

6. Impact

- ◆ older residents of South Lanarkshire who have experienced poor mobility due to the impact of COVID-19 will have improved strength and balance and reduced their risk of falls by taking part in the project
- ◆ older people will have increased confidence using wearable technology
- ◆ older people will have engaged in guided online exercise programmes
- ◆ participants will feel more confident about re-engaging with centre based activity programmes when they become available again
- ◆ older people will feel more confident about re-engaging in community activity after lockdown
- ◆ older people will feel confident about managing their own long term health condition

7. Employee Implications

- 7.1. This project can be accommodated within the existing employee resource.

8. Financial Implications

- 8.1. The Funding provided for the Project has been provided by the Safer South Lanarkshire Board.

9. Climate Change, Sustainability and Environmental Implications

- 9.1. There are no Climate Change, Sustainability or Environmental Implications associated with this report.

10. Other Implications

- 10.1. Taking part in this initiative will allow the Council to deliver on its commitment to improve later life.

This initiative helps tackle isolation and loneliness in older people.

Paul Manning

Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources)

1 June 2021

Link(s) to Council Values/Ambitions/Objectives

- Improve later life
- Support communities to tackle disadvantage and deprivation
- Support aspiration

Previous References

None

List of Background Papers

None

Contact for Further Information

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:-

Gill Bhatti

Ext: 5604 (Tel: 01698 455604)

E-mail: gill.bhatti@southlanarkshire.gov.uk