

STAYING WELL IN CALDERDALE

BACKGROUND

In 2014 a new pilot project, 'Staying Well', was designed to explore the impact of bespoke, community-based interventions for lonely and isolated older people. It was established from an emerging evidence base around the health consequences of social isolation and loneliness, e.g. that lacking social networks is as damaging to health as smoking 15 cigarettes a day.

AIM OF STAYING WELL

To test how a range of interventions could impact positively on the health and wellbeing of individuals. The objectives were:

1. Reduce loneliness and social isolation in Calderdale and positively impact on:
 - a) Improving the health and wellbeing of individuals and reducing health inequalities
 - b) reducing demand on GP practices and unplanned admissions to hospital
2. Create more connected communities
3. Improved intersectoral/systems working

Considered a ground-breaking approach at the time, it was enthusiastically supported as a key initiative in tackling physical and mental health.



COLLABORATIVE APPROACH

Led by Public Health and funded by Calderdale CCG and Calderdale Council, the project put the voluntary sector at the forefront of our approach. A Steering Group, consisting of leads from the Council, the CCG and voluntary sector, along with the lead for the independent evaluation from Lincoln University.

THE PILOT

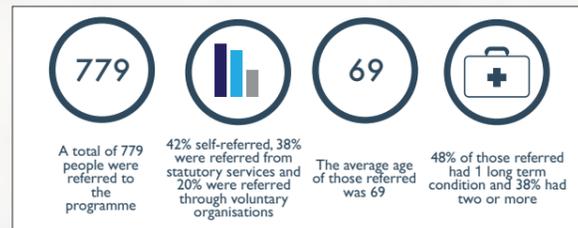
Four Staying Well workers were located in four voluntary sector community hubs, working closely with the Council's neighbourhood workers. The Staying Well workers carried out face-to-face 'holistic' and 'asset-based' visits with older people to ascertain their needs, wants and skills. Workers facilitated attendance at a range of community and local activities, sometimes attending with older people.



MICRO-COMMISSIONING

Integral to this was the use of 'micro-commissioning' budgets. Each Staying Well 'hub' was given a devolved fund of £50,000 to build community capacity, strengthening existing local provision and developing new and innovative activities. Each hub approached this differently, some undertaking a grants based approach whilst others used the funding to provide facilities for use by local groups. The independent evaluation concluded that "the micro-commissioning exercise was particularly effective".

RESULTS FROM THE PILOT



The evaluation found that between November 2014 and April 2016, 779 people were referred to Staying Well, with 55% from the most deprived areas of Calderdale.

Unsurprisingly, those who lived in areas of higher deprivation reported a lower quality of life, a greater number of long-term conditions and higher levels of loneliness and social isolation.

Overall, the mean 'score' of loneliness fell; people reported feeling less lonely than before the start of the programme. People under the age of 55 reported an improvement in their health related quality of life by almost a fifth (18%) and people aged 59 and under reported an improvement in their health-related quality of life of over two-thirds (70%). In one area, the programme reported a (statistically significant) 10% improvement in their health state.

The economic evaluation concluded that Staying Well was beneficial for people under the age of 59 and similar improvements around cost-effectiveness were possible over a longer period. Latest research undertaken by the London School of Economics shows that every £1 invested in tackling loneliness can save £3 in health costs.

STAYING WELL HERE TO STAY!

The programme has now expanded to cover all of Calderdale and is now a firmly established and recognisable 'brand'. Staying Well has expanded to work with a range of partners including the Fire and Rescue Service's Safe and Well Checks and Calderdale's Affordable Warmth programme. All Staying Well workers are seconded to voluntary sector hubs and the programme has recently been awarded funding from the Community Foundation for Calderdale to undertake further micro-commissioning in local areas. The Local Government Chronicle has also short-listed the programme under the public health section.



SETTING THE PACE

The relationships built through Staying Well have reaped benefits in other areas of public health. For example, one of the community hubs has become involved in Calderdale's suicide prevention group. Similarly, a programme around "Taking Control of Pain" is now being delivered in the community, in a collaboration between the acute trust, a voluntary sector support organisation (VAC) and a new service staffed by social workers, based in the local market, providing accessible, face-to-face information and support "to stay healthy, independent and in control of your life for as long as possible".

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Calderdale
Council

References

McDaid, D., Bauer, A. and La Park, A. (September 2017) **Making the economic case for investing in actions to prevent and/or tackle loneliness: a systematic review**, LSE