

Date	10 January 2023
Agenda Item	16



Report to: West Lothian Integration Joint Board

Report Title: Community Connections Implementation update

Report By: Senior Manager, Adult Services

Summary of Report and Implications	
Purpose	This report: (tick any that apply).
	- seeks a decision <input type="checkbox"/>
	- is to provide assurance <input type="checkbox"/>
	- is for information <input type="checkbox"/>
	- is for discussion <input type="checkbox"/>
	The purpose of the report is to provide an update on the progress made with regard to the implementation of the Community Connections Hubs
Recommendations	note the content of the report
Directions to NHS Lothian and/or West Lothian Council	A direction(s) is not required.
Resource/ Finance/ Staffing	£60,000 one-off funding
Policy/Legal	N/A
Risk	There is no risk identified with this service currently.
Equality, Health Inequalities, Environmental and	An integrated impact assessment for Community Wellbeing Hubs was completed for the IJB's Strategic Plan 2019 – 2023.

Sustainability Issues	
Strategic Planning and Commissioning	N/A
Locality Planning	Locality perspectives are taken into consideration due to the nature of the service.
Engagement	Internal services and local community organisations

Terms of Report

1. Background

- 1.1 The Development of Community Hubs has been identified as a key component of the West Lothian Health and Social Care Partnership's 'Home First' transformation programme. The programme aims to redesign the way in which health and social care services are delivered for adults and older people in West Lothian. The delivery of the hubs is undertaken in partnership with West Lothian Council's antipoverty service who were awarded funding from West Lothian Council to develop community hubs to support individuals as we mobilised out of the Covid-19.
- 1.2 Community Connections aims to support those who attend with accessing a range of statutory and volunteering services that may operate within their local communities.
- 1.3 The intention is for the hubs to operate in informal locations throughout West Lothian, in places where people pass through naturally, to creating a relaxed environment for people to receive information and advice. It was proposed that a range of supports would be offered through a volunteering model with input from social work, carers organisations, the advice shop, and other partners. Short-term funding was awarded by the council for 2022 to 2023 to enable recruitment of a Business Support Officer to support the development of the agreed model.

2. Current Position

- 2.1 A project board has been established and is chaired by Senior officers from NHS Lothian and West Lothian Council with a range of core partners from existing council, NHS and third sector organisations. As part of the project board and decision making the board have summarised the project into four phases.
- 2.2 Phase one of the project identified two initial sites that would act as pilot sites, the sites selected were Linlithgow Partnership Centre and West Calder Education Centre and Community Hub. These have been operating weekly since March 2022.
- 2.3 The volume of those accessing the Community Hubs has steadily increased. Seventy engagements have occurred since the Hubs were established with a significant number of these engagements being from returning individuals and others who have been referred to the drop-ins via personal recommendations from previous individuals who have found the support useful.
- 2.4 As support to the Ukrainian Settlement Programme developed, a proportion of the Linlithgow community had Ukrainian nationals living with them. In recognition of this, the Community Hub in

- Linlithgow adapted its provision to provide support and advice to Ukrainian families and individuals to drop in and receive support, information and advice to help with their very specific circumstances.
- 2.5 A review of phase one was completed by the then project officer which highlighted a need to have better engagement with existing groups operating within the community and foster better links to ensure effective signposting. Alongside this, whilst the attendance at the initial two hubs has increased there was an acknowledgement that better and more local advertisement of the role and purpose of the hubs was needed. All of which was considered for phase 2.
- 2.6 Phase two of the project has focused on the establishment of a further two hubs in Livingston North Partnership Centre and in Blackburn Partnership Centre.
- 2.7 Alongside this the Business Support Officer developed a communication and engagement strategy to ensure an ongoing programme of engagement and publicity. This included the development of a specific webpage hosted on the council website that provides up to date information on the hubs and the organisations represented.
- 2.8 Both hubs were due to launch in September 2022 however were delayed due to the period of national mourning. The hubs opened in November.
- 2.9 Phase 2 also so the launch of the volunteer recruitment campaign for volunteers. This resulted in seven individuals registering and completing their training. The volunteers have recently begun attending hubs in a shadowing role before commencing their full role in January 2023. There will be a rolling programme of volunteering recruitment to ensure a sufficient pool of volunteers to support the ongoing development and roll out of the project. The ongoing recruitment of volunteers is integral to the expansion and ongoing sustainability of Community Connections.
- 2.10 The cost of living crisis is a concern for many people and to support people's financial concerns all staff are being trained to offer benefit health checks to individuals attending the drop-ins to ensure individuals incomes are maximised and to seek additional financial advice if required.
- 2.11 Part of Phase 2 was the development of on-line hubs. During the pandemic the online video conferencing platform Near Me was utilised successfully by NHS and by West Lothian Health and Social Care Partnership's Mental Health hubs.
- 2.12 For Community Connections we plan on using this online platform to support members of the community where there is either not a hub in their community or they are unable to make one of the face to face drop ins. Staff and volunteers are currently being trained in its use with it being expected that this online version of Community Connections goes live in early 2023.
- 3. Future Plans**
- 3.1 The project board is now focusing on the delivery of phase 3 and phase 4 of the project.
- 3.2 Phase 3 will see the establishment of hubs in East Calder, Whitburn, Fauldhouse and Broxburn. Work has already been established with partners and community groups ensuring community support. It is anticipated that these hubs will go live in mid- December 2022.
- 3.3 Phase 4, which is planned to launch in March 2023 will see a further four hubs in Armadale, Bathgate, Craigshill and Winchburgh.
- 3.4 A full evaluation of the current hubs will be undertaken analysing the impact of the project against key project objectives of
- improving access to information, advice and signposting within communities

- to support early intervention, self-management and to reduce reliance on statutory services where alternative community supports might be available.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1 The ongoing development of Community Connections remains a key priority for the Health and Social Care Partnership. Whilst the numbers attending the drop ins started slowly there is steady growth in the number of people accessing the service.
- 4.2 Experience from the development of phase one of the project has resulted in a number of improvements being made in the roll out of Phase two and the planning for phase 3 and 4.

Appendices	None
References	None
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