



THE EDINBURGH PARTNERSHIP

North-West Locality Community Planning Partnership

Friday 18 November 2022, 10.00am
MS Teams

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Agenda

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Minutes of last meeting
3. Cost of Living Crisis
4. Poverty and Prevention Service
5. LIP Priority Quarterly Updates
 - Reports for priorities 1 and 3 included report for priority 2 to follow
6. Neighbourhood Network Updates
7. Empowerment Team Update
8. Forward Planning
9. AOB
10. Date of Next Meeting



THE EDINBURGH PARTNERSHIP

NORTH-WEST LOCALITY COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIP

Friday 29 April 2021: 10.30 – 12:00

Microsoft Teams

MINUTE

Members present

Dawn Anderson	Forth & Inverleith Voluntary Sector Forum Representative
Councillor Claire Bridgeman Anna Duff	Edinburgh Health and Social Care Partnership
Andrew Field Percy Fekety	City of Edinburgh Council Almond Neighbourhood Network Representative
Councillor George Gordon Martin Higgins Carol Marr Steve Kerr	City of Edinburgh Council NHS Lothian City of Edinburgh Council Western Neighbourhood Network Representative (Co-chair)
Tommy McLean	Western & Almond Voluntary Sector Forum rep
Liz McIntosh	Western & Almond Voluntary Sector Forum rep

In attendance

Julie Dickson	City of Edinburgh Council
Michele Mulvaney	City of Edinburgh Council

Apologies

Joan Beattie	Inverleith Neighbourhood Network Representative
Helen Bourquin	City of Edinburgh Council
Nick Croft	Edinburgh College
Ramsay Dow	Skills Development Scotland
Alan Hill	Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS)
Mark Landels	Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS)
Joyce McAree Millar	Skills Development Scotland
Councillor Max Mitchell	City of Edinburgh Council
Sarah Taylor	Police Scotland
Morag Wilson	Forth & Inverleith Voluntary Sector Forum Representative
Heather Yang	Volunteer Edinburgh

1. Welcome and Apologies

As above

2. Update from Andrew Field (Head of Community Empowerment, CEC)

Andrew advised that the Lifelong Learning organisation review had not yet commenced, discussions and negotiations were still underway. His service will emerge from this 45-day review. When the review commences, Andrew will begin meeting with LCPP chairs regarding their priorities. At the next LCPP meeting he will announce his structure, staff team and priorities.

Tommy enquired which services Andrew's team would cover. Andrew advised that the community learning element would sit with Education and Childrens' Services. Community engagement and empowerment will sit with Andrew's team and will take in locality community planning partnerships (LCPPs), neighbourhood networks (NNs), participatory budgeting (PB) and devolved budgets.

George stated that someone to take responsibility for the community empowerment and engagement has long been desired. Steve endorsed George's comments adding that he looked forward to working together.

3. Minutes of Meeting held 28 Feb 2022 and Action Tracking

The note of the previous meeting was agreed.

The action tracker will be updated. Steve explained that he would invite Bridie to the next LCPP along with Charlie Wright who is leading on the climate change work for Edinburgh Voluntary Organisations' Council (EVOC).

4. Edinburgh Partnership (EP) Update – Michele Mulvaney

Michele advised that the refreshed Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) was approved by the EP Board in March. It had been reviewed in light of Covid-19, to take account of the poverty agenda and priority 3 'A good place to live' had been adapted. Michele advised that she would circulate the document and was happy to have a more in-depth presentation at a later meeting.

The other substantive item was the 'cost of living' crisis and what was being done on top of day-to-day work to address this, particularly in terms of funding investments. A workshop had been held, the results of which would be drafted into a paper for June EP Board. George requested early sight of this for LCPP members.

Steve added that from a community council perspective a paper on the reform agenda is due to go to June EP Board, this will hopefully bring a resolution. He extended thanks to for the officer support on this matter. George thanked Michele for her support, engagement and input.

Decision

- Cost of living crisis paper to be circulated to members

5. Locality Improvement Plan Priorities- Quarterly Reports

a) Employment and skills

No update submitted. Nick had tendered apologies for the meeting. Steve added that a note from Nick had been received indicating that he would be stepping down from his lead officer role for this priority and the LCPP would be looking for someone to step into this role.

b) Social Isolation – please see report with papers

Community commissioning trial to disburse the Edinburgh Community Mental Health & Wellbeing Fund in NW locality – Anna advised that the process was facilitated by EVOC and in NW £180k was awarded to local activities which would reduce social isolation. An independent researcher has been commissioned to conduct an evaluation which will inform the process going forward.

Improving connections between Health & Social Care teams and local 3rd sector (enabling the Three Conversations in NW locality) – Anna reported that staffing pressures have slowed the pace of the roll out of the Three Conversations approach but that it is still being taken forward.

Volunteer facilitated short walk service from GP practices for socially isolated patients at risk of becoming frail and/or housebound – The data sharing agreement is now in place and referrals can be made directly to Volunteer Edinburgh.

Increase anxiety management & wellbeing provision in West Edinburgh – Workshops are now full and Health in Mind are considering expanding the provision in NW. Venue's for Andy's Man Club are still being explored.

Tommy explained that he had spoken to people in connection with the Health and Wellbeing Fund and there were concerns around the number of groups not considered for funding and told that they didn't meet the criteria, particularly in North Edinburgh. This was particularly true of smaller groups, and he was keen to explore why they had fallen through the gaps. He added that he would like to speak with Anna in relation to Health in Mind.

George said that earlier engagement to support understanding and an overall review of the criteria was needed.

Dawn explained that she is taking part in an independent evaluation and that she would forward details to Tommy. She said that there was some anxiety about whether core funding might be allocated in this way.

Decision

- Tommy and Anna to liaise re Health in Mind
- Dawn to forward evaluation details to Tommy

c) North Edinburgh

Dawn reported that around £213,858 was awarded to grass roots organisations and community groups in NW from the Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund – please follow the link in the report for a full breakdown.

Craigroyston High School – A meeting took place on 27 April with Claire Stewart, Depute Head Teacher. It was agreed to move to a more sustainable approach to food support and help with wider income maximisation.

Activities agreed include –

- a) Information stations for parents, these would operate in the morning for maximum uptake during school drop-off. This will commence at the beginning of the new school year and a meeting is scheduled for 24 August to take this forward.
- b) Food activity Fridays – 4 organisations would each deliver an activity once per month, covering every Friday, including cook and shares and takeaways.
- c) School of Football delivery is run twice weekly on Wednesday and Friday by Spartans. Work will be done to look at how to introduce food provision in conjunction with this.

Dawn advised that an information leaflet would be produced and posted, she explained that posting produces a better response and Volunteer Edinburgh usually help with this.

In terms of the cost-of-living crisis Dawn advised that the Voluntary Sector Forum (VSF) had looked at connections and how to include food with other activities and increase dignified access to food and access to heat.

George commented that Empty Kitchens would be very keen to support this work.

Decision

- George requested that feedback/ reports from community groups and organisations go on the agenda as a standing item

6. Neighbourhood Networks

Western

The next meeting will take place on 25 May. The previous meeting was on 9 February. Steve reported that the Western NN had discussed Neighbourhood Environment Projects (NEPs) in detail as well as a wider discussion and proposal to have a dedicated meeting to review the project bank in light of developments.

In terms community grants, Youth Decides had been allocated £5k but this didn't go ahead. 11 projects were considered and all were funded. The Scout Group have since been awarded funding elsewhere leaving a balance of £3879 in CGF. Corstorphine Community Centre had made an application to provide English language training particularly to Afghan/Ukrainian refugees this was agreed subsequent to the meeting and the balance of the fund awarded.

In terms of social isolation Tommy commented that progress was slower than was hoped but a sub-group is being developed. A mapping exercise is underway with regards to communications. Links have been made with the VSF and together a 2 page newsletter is being produced monthly letting people know about groups and encouraging engagement. Tommy said he'd like to speak with Andrew about this. Tommy encouraged other members to make links with the zoo as there are opportunities there for engagement/joint work.

Steve advised that Elaine Lennon had stood down from providing secretariat for the NN, he acknowledged Elaine's valuable contribution and advised that Carol Marr would now take on the role.

Forth

George reported that a meeting had taken place on Wednesday 27 April. There was a Neighbourhood Environment Project (NEP) update. Approximately 20 projects have been approved and these will make significant changes to the Forth ward especially to corner plots and communal bin elements. A presentation was made on food and poverty update. The Covid Response and Recovery Group (R2) gave an update on activity. George commented that there are a lot of groups now involved with this and the forum is growing. There was discussion about Community Grants Funding (CGF) and a good understanding was

provided on how the money was being spent. The next meeting will be on 26 June, chaired by Fred Marinello.

Inverleith

Both Joan and Max had tendered apologies and as such no report was available. George requested that 1-page reports be requested to update on NN activity in future.

Almond

Percy explained that the meeting due on 9 March had been cancelled and that he would speak to Keith Giblett about rearranging this. Carol updated that a new meeting date had been set for 8 June. The March meeting had been cancelled because the funding panel had met shortly before and allocated the remaining funds, so a further meeting was not required at that point.

Liz advised that the mapping exercise has progressed, and that Carol will look at changing the Excel spreadsheet into a more accessible format. She asked for any suggestions on how to get this out to the public as it is a significant document (in terms of printing) but not everyone has access to a computer. Dawn commented that PCHP have a community and food map in hard copy but these tend to have quite a short life.

Decision

- NN Leads to contribute 1-page reports
- Tommy and Andrew to liaise re communications

7. AOB

Steve advised that George will be standing down as a councillor at the forthcoming elections and he extended his thanks and that of the group to George. He stated that his contribution is always appreciated and wished George every success in the future.

Claire added that she too, would be standing down as a councillor. She commented that she was very impressed with what the group had achieved and extended her thanks to members for their time and contribution.

George thanked the members commenting that this forum was working well and is worth persisting with, it will go from strength to strength and give communities a voice. George added that he will continue to be engaged with the group and thanked members for their support, help and advice, and attendance. He acknowledged the contribution of all but with particular emphasis on the voluntary members, praising their dedication.

8. DONM

To be confirmed following council elections

Number	Date	Topic	Action	Action Owner	Expected completion date	Status	Comments
1	05/02/2021	Locality Improvement Plan	Nick to liaise with Council colleagues re linking into schools	Nick			
2	27/05/2021	Presentation by Bridie Ashrowan from EVOC	Bridie to come back to subsequent meeting to update on progress	Steve	Mar-22		Steve will extend an invite to Bridie for next LCPP
3	04/10/2021	AOB	Steve to provide minute	Steve			
4	10/12/2021	My Community North presentation	Lynn and Scott to link re on-going partnership and funding.	Scott			
5	10/12/2021	Locality Improvement Plan Priorities - Social Isolation	Dawn to share social isolation case study.	Dawn			
6	10/12/2021	Locality Improvement Plan Priorities - North Edinburgh	Mike/Anna to look into training of VSF staff in carrying out assessments	Mike/Anna			
7	10/12/2021	Locality Improvement Plan Priorities - North Edinburgh	Mike/Anna to provide statistics on assessment backlogs as a means of managing expectations	Mike/Anna	Apr-22		Anna will report to next LCPP
8	10/12/2021	Neighbourhood Networks Update	Almond NN to invite Lisa to future meeting	Percy	Mar-22		Percy will provide invite at next mtg
9	10/12/2021	AOB	Steve to raise issues of lack of representation at LCPPs and inconsistency of community council policing reports with appropriate representatives.	Steve	Apr-22		Steve will provide update to next LCPP
10	28/02/2022	20 minute N'hood presentation	20-minute neighbourhood team to come back with workshop ideas	20-min N'hood Team			
11	28/02/2022	20 minute N'hood presentation	Workshop on definition of 'hub' to be scoped	20-min N'hood Team			
12	28/02/2022	LIP Update - social isolation	Look at structure of the VSF in NW	Tommy			
13	28/02/2022	LIP Update - social isolation	Meeting between VSF Chairs and Head of Empowerment	Tommy			

14	28/02/2022	LIP Update - social isolation	Call for support around a venue for Andy's Man Club	Tommy/ All			
15	28/02/2022	NN Updates Forth	Scott to ask Living in Harmony to circulate report	Scott			
16	29/04/2022	EP Update	Cost of living crisis paper to be circulated to members	Michele			
17	29/04/2022	LIP Update - social isolation	Tommy and Anna to liaise re Health in Mind	Tommy/ Anna			
18	29/04/2022	LIP Update - social isolation	Dawn to forward evaluation details to Tommy	Dawn			
19	29/04/2022	LIP Updates - North Edinburgh	George requested that feedback/ reports from community groups and organisations go on the agenda as a standing item	Agenda Planning/ Chair			
20	29/04/2022	NN Updates	NN Leads to contribute 1-page reports	NN Reps			
21		NN Updates	Tommy and Andrew to liaise re communications	Tommy/ Andrew			
22	29/04/2022		Request from Molly Page to present to LCPP when new term begins				
23	29/04/2022	LIP Updates	New lead officer for priority 1 required				



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LIP quarterly progress report

Date of LCPP group for consideration: 18th November 2022

Lead officer: Anna Duff (NW Locality Manager, EHSCP)

Priority theme: Theme 1 – Social Isolation

Actions completed in the last quarter (since the last progress report)

As the LCPP has not met since April 2022, this report covers the period April-October 2022.

The subgroup has met once during this period and is next due to meet on 23rd November 2022. As per its Terms of Reference, the group advocates to keep “reducing social isolation” as a priority shared outcome in the locality, by joining the dots between different workstreams, promoting relevant opportunities, highlighting and amplifying good practice and raising awareness of gaps in provision and opportunity. The group does not have a specific workplan, rather we use a shared outcomes framework (attached). This helps us identify work in the locality that contributes to reducing social isolation and maximise the impact of this through networking and relationship building. This report highlights some of these activities but in no way can represent everything that is happening across the locality and does not attempt to do this. Please see attached outcomes framework to see how these activities together help to reduce social isolation.

- *Raise awareness of existing opportunities to connect*
 - Publication of local ‘What’s On’ leaflets (e.g. monthly Almond & West VSF leaflet)
 - Local leaflets complement council’s NW news and opportunities newsletter
 - Community Festival days throughout the summer period
 - Extensive networking in north Edinburgh area as part of LIP priority 3
- *Reduce impact of barriers to participation (inc. financial, digital inclusion, frailty)*
 - Several welcoming, inclusive and free or very low-cost community spaces have opened / in process of opening in the last half year e.g. Fresh Start Community Hub, the Corstorphine Community Centre new site at Westfield House (Community Asset Transfer in progress), SpaceToBe (partnership between 3rd sector and Gyle shopping centre)
 - CEC library staff participated in community events over the summer months to help people complete applications for bus passes and NEC cards (a service that continues to be offered in the libraries)
 - Data sharing agreement in place between GP practice and Volunteer Edinburgh to allow volunteers to accompany people on short walks from their own homes



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- *Link with and support the actions of the LIP Employment and Skills workstream to promote welfare and employability advice*
 - Briefing prepared for NW locality HSC staff to increase awareness of poverty, encourage HSC staff to ask about money worries and signpost to local advice services where appropriate. This briefing has now been incorporated into a wider training offer as part of the coordinated city response to the cost crisis under the LOIP.
 - HSCP community recruitment event hosted at Fresh Start
- *Increase social prescribing, including green prescribing*
 - The Community Link Worker Network has expanded to cover additional GP surgeries in the locality, reflecting a growing awareness of the benefits of social prescribing. The network has recently celebrated its 5-year anniversary.
 - NW Who's Who event in October 2022 brought together local health and social care teams with local 3rd sector (over 100 participants)
 - EHSCP cluster managers extended an open invitation to local 3rd sector to attend team meetings to meet staff and share information about their services. This is intended to help HSC staff use the 3 conversations approach to provide person-centred, holistic support to people in their care, linking and signposting to wider opportunities.
- *Increase opportunities for befriending/ companionship, and peer support*

A number of funding opportunities that specifically targeted social isolation have been made available this year. Efforts to promote these funding calls, support applications, and work together to reduce duplication and extend reach have resulted in a significant number of organisations in NW receiving funding through the first year of the Scottish Government's Communities Mental Health & Wellbeing Fund, the Edinburgh Pact's Capacity to Collaborate fund, Thrive Edinburgh's Enliven grants among others. This has funded:

- Increased capacity and number of peer support groups and coaching opportunities
 - Lunch clubs for older people
 - Increased support for men's shed
 - Social opportunities to grow, cook and eat together
 - Language exchange groups for refugees and new arrivals to the city (case study below)
 - A new support worker service covering north Edinburgh (Nessie)
- *Promote "everyday" techniques to improve mental wellbeing and resilience*
 - "Wellbeing toolkit" sessions in different community venues across the locality (facilitated by Health in Mind as part of the Thrive Collective)



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- Webinar to raise awareness of digital therapeutics Daylight & Sleepio for anxiety and sleep problems (free use for anyone in Scotland) attended by over 60 different 3rd sector organisations (June 2022)

Milestones expected to be achieved in the next quarter

1. Planning for next LIP after March 2023 - many different citywide workstreams contribute to the outcomes set out in the current LIP. There is an opportunity for the next plan to bring these together at the local level, maintaining a focus on reducing social isolation.
2. Excellent engagement in the community commissioning process for the Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing fund Year 2 (Nov '22- March '23) to ensure the locality benefits from this opportunity
3. Social activities and peer support throughout the winter period funded through various small grant schemes
4. Confirm date and participants for Keep Safe training in the small North area
5. Mental Health First Aid Training for smaller voluntary organisations, arranged by Almond & West VSF in conjunction with Edinburgh College, dates tbc

Barriers/challenges (physical, partnership, financial etc)

Lack of clarity around community planning within new CEC structure; no communication about status of LIP after March 2022.

Sustained and significant pressures on frontline services across all sectors

Recruitment and staffing has been a challenge for HSC teams and across 3rd sector in some roles

Lack of free, low-cost venues in some parts of the locality to host community groups and activities



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Wider factors/influencers (i.e. legislative changes)

Economic situation – wider cost crisis and inflation has resulted in more people seeking support from our local agencies for e.g. welfare and energy advice, support with food, stress and distress related to money worries.

Policy changes around food labelling – change in law regarding Best Before labelling has resulted in less food available to local organisations that are members of Fair Share. This has had an impact on the provision of low cost or free food, and activities that incorporate these

Ukraine crisis – around 6500 refugees from the Ukraine have been triaged through the Edinburgh Welcome Hub since the start of the conflict and many of these people remain hosted and supported in the city. All sectors have allocated resources to support the Ukraine response including mobilisation of many volunteers and a coordinated effort from key agencies.

Case study examples – please complete for any examples of success/good practice that has been achieved to date under this priority

See below: **“Reducing social isolation and loneliness - PCHP weekly Chat Café and Language Exchange.”**



Reducing social isolation and loneliness PCHP weekly Chat Café and Language Exchange

The Living in Harmony Chat Café is a women only safe space supporting new connections with a strengths-based approach. Women share their knowledge, experiences, self-care after the pandemic. The Adult Mental Health and Wellbeing funding has enabled the in-person group to re-establish itself after limited virtual engagement during lockdowns, and the additionality of the Language Exchange has revitalised learning and sharing, as a direct response to expressed need from the group for an informal space to learn and practice English.

PCHP uses the Five Ways to Wellbeing framework. Three outcomes are the focus of the weekly Chat Café and Language Exchange:

Connect – reduce social isolation and loneliness, more connected to others

Learn – Increase skills, confidence and agency

Give – Increased feelings of belonging, increased contribution and more able to be themselves

Quote from Chat Café and Language Exchange group member:

I'm really happy to have found out about Chat Cafe in my local area, it helps me to get out of the house and meet new people. Since being in lockdown for such a long time haven't really been anywhere.

It's great meeting different people & learning new things

But really just getting out of the house for that hour is good, having somewhere to go and have a coffee & chat with others does the world of good

The Chat Café has become a good place for women who are new or settled migrants to meet with women who grew up in the local area and who want to learn more about their community. It has been running for over nine years. It supports everyone's feelings of belonging and connection to the area whilst creating an informal space for women to meet and to learn. This is enhanced by a WhatsApp group where women join and then share local



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information and ask questions of each other. For a number of women learning English is important so it is a safe informal space to practice English and to share experiences outside of a formal classroom setting. There is the opportunity to talk about different cultures they've experienced and how people are finding settling into Edinburgh and the local area. There is the opportunity to share something of their home country and life before they came to Scotland with the group.

As the above quote from one participant suggests it is a helpful way for her to start a new routine, to meet nearby women and make new friends, and provides some valuable me-time in a safe, supportive environment. The in-person Chat Café and Language Exchange is more popular than the online version during the lockdowns and as the quote also suggests if someone has been isolating for an extended period over lockdown it is good to be able to find somewhere to go that's not too far. There are currently 12 languages being shared within the Language Exchange, with the chance to learn and practice English as the focus. Often women will transition from the Chat Café and the Language Exchange to other groups that are more structured or progress to volunteering, more formal learning opportunities or employment once they are ready, so it is a useful bridging or introductory group for local White Scottish women as well as new and settled migrant women and a useful place to learn about what's on in the community, at PCHP, and at other local organisations.

The Chat Café runs every Monday morning between 0915 and 1230, starting with cooking and sharing breakfast at PCHP.

PCHP 8 Nov 22

For LCPP delivery group to complete

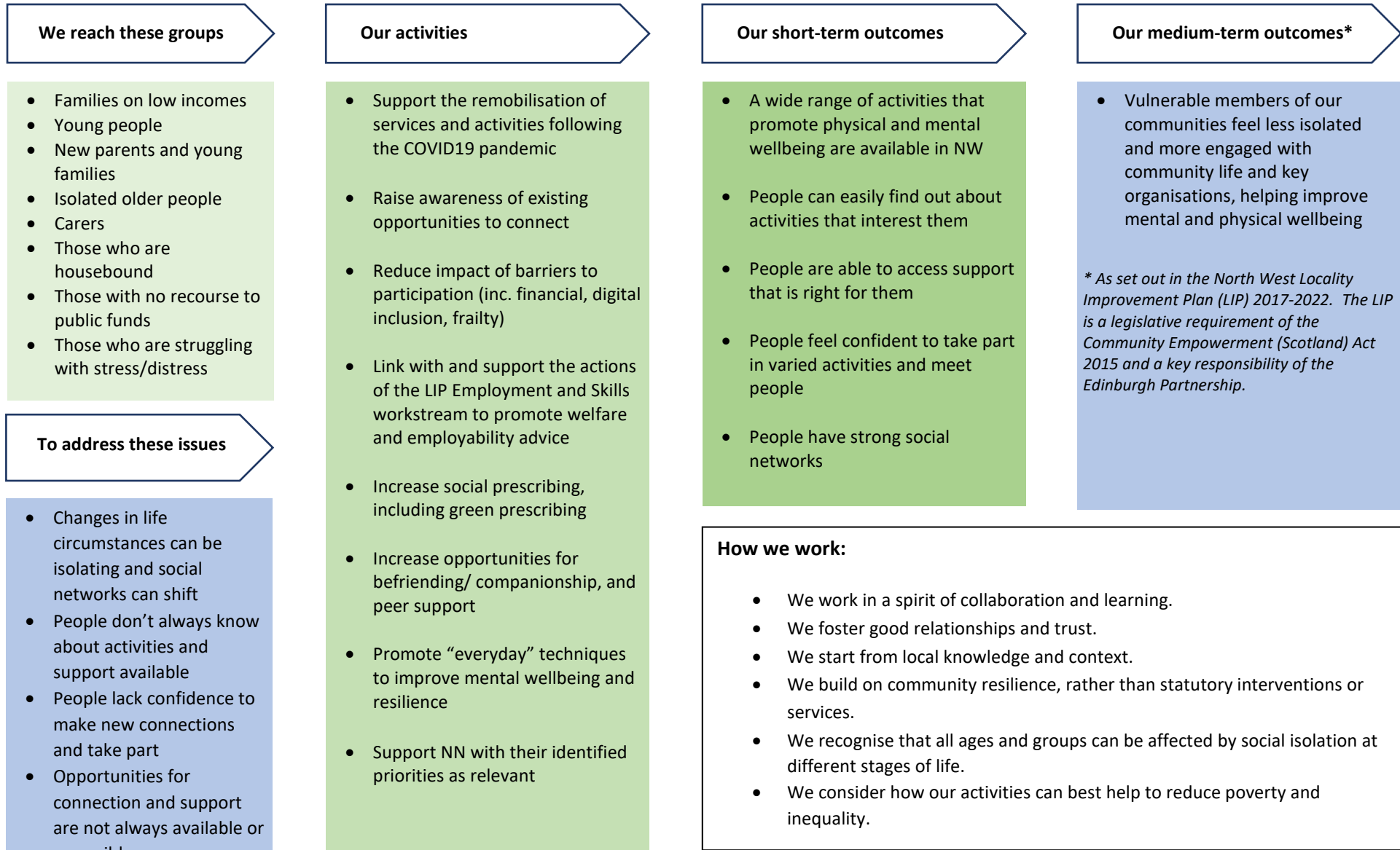
Date considered:

Is the priority on track? Y/N

Any decisions to be taken? (i.e. change of actions, escalation)

Feedback to lead officer (if any)

NWLCPP: Reducing Social Isolation in NW Edinburgh, shared outcomes framework (version 29.09.21)





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LIP quarterly progress report

Date of LCPP group for consideration: Friday 18th November 2022

Lead officer: Dawn Anderson / Morag Wilson (NVSF) (Supported by CEC Lifelong Learning)

Priority theme: North Edinburgh

Actions Completed in the last quarter (Since the last report)

Overarching High level outcome: 'Develop a robust mechanism for engaging with the community to articulate and develop plans to combat poverty and inequality in North Edinburgh'

Response and Recovery Group (R2) Development Day

A very successful networking /development day was held on the 6th October at Muirhouse Millenium Centre with 27 people in attendance representing (Fresh Start, NEA, PCHP, SCFA, Scran Academy, LIFT, Community Renewal, Granton Info Centre, West Pilton Neighbourhood Centre, MYDG, Old Kirk Muirhouse Parish Church, Circle, PEP, Granton Community Gardeners, Granton Walled Garden, CEC – Lifelong Learning, Fet Lor, Granton Youth, Empty Kitchens, CAB, Project Esperanza) organisations and services. The aims of the event were to strengthen the connection between the R2 members , establish agreed principles and ways of working together, and identify the priorities for the next 18 months .

A working group will use feedback from the event plus information gathered from a members survey to identify priorities , actions and resources to focus on for the next 18 months

Voluntary Sector /Health and Social Care Networking Event

On the 13th October a 'Who's who' North West Networking event was held between the voluntary sector and Health and Social care Partnership NW teams. The aim was to renew and strengthen partnerships between teams in order to offer a more person centred and sustained support to the people they work with. As well as being a really successful day, information below was gathered on all the agencies and EVOC will compile responses and share information.

- Organisation Name:
- Location of services (*highlight here if online services as well or only*):
- Who do you support:
- Types of service offered:
- How to get in touch:
- Current capacity?:

Support to Craigroyston High School

Building on work that was done earlier in the year to support families of children attending Craigroyston High School an information leaflet was put together outlining the range of family support in North Edinburgh. There are 2 sessions planned for 25th November and 1st December when agencies and services will have a stall in the school to promote and share the support and services they can offer to families.



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Warm Spaces and food Access Points

A lot of work has been done to develop warm spaces, ideally with activities available, to encourage and destigmatise attendance. A spreadsheet is being compiled to give a neighbourhood overview and help with planning. A leaflet has also been compiled and shared of Food Access Points across the area.

The R2 network, and its sub groups, continue to meet and share information among its members on funding and training opportunities in order to support and strengthen each other and bring valuable resources into the community

Barriers/challenges (physical, partnership, financial etc)

As well as impacting on the wider community the cost of living crisis is affecting agencies. As well as having to support the increased needs of their service users they are having to support their own staff and meet the higher energy costs of running their venues. With the warmer spaces initiative, where possible, they will look to identify how resources can be shared and services provided in partnership.

The closure of one Community Centre and the difficulties faced by 2 others in the local area highlight the difficulties faced by projects in the current climate.



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Case study examples – please complete for any examples of success/good practice that has been achieved to date under this priority

Case Study Fresh Start: Trainee

Michal joined the training course and chose to volunteer in the Fresh Start gardens. He suffers greatly from anxiety and had quit his full-time job as he found it overwhelming and often felt misunderstood. His first challenge as he describes it was to actually turn up once a week.

“It was a challenge for my anxiety as each time I felt nervous. As I got assigned my task, I felt proud of myself for staying to the end. I felt surprised that I achieved what I did.”

Michal worked with other service users and volunteers one day a week in the local community garden helping to grow fresh produce and learning about organic food. He also helped out building planters developing some woodworking skills. The sessions also are intended to ensure service users learn about their local support networks and encourage them to think about other community activities. Michal said the sessions:

“Gave me good training and I learned lots. Furthermore, I have learned about support network in my local community e.g. mental health. I am interested in gardening, so this was the good way to see it and learn how it works. Learning new skills was important to me My hope was that it would help me find a job as well as to make new friends as it is important for me to develop social confidence”.

Michal identified some key strengths of his training and volunteering work experience:

1. The importance of the training environment

“Working with someone who was so understanding and patient during the workshops, made it enjoyable, relaxed for me and It made most of the participants feel welcome and comfortable.”

2. Different learning styles

“The different activities allowed us to learn in different ways and we worked well together as a group and helped each other. Working as a group helped me learn how to plan and prioritise tasks, how to improve my communication through listening to other people and to be more sympathetic to others”.

The practical sessions where you are shown how to do things, then doing it made me feel more comfortable to share my ideas. I have learned some practical and communication skills and I enjoy trying new activities as part of a team.

3. Learning from others

“It introduced me to new people - people in the same position as myself and I learned from others. I interacted with people of different backgrounds who share my passion for giving back and working with nature. This experience is helping me to feel more confident and feel a part of something”.

“I’m naturally not very talkative and can be shy among other people that I find superior and loud. This prevented me from speaking up from fear of judgement and rejection in other situations. Being a part of a work-group that values people and meeting people in similar situation felt healthier and more positive”.



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4. One to one Support

"One to one sessions are very helpful to me, as they give me space and time to feel listened to away from the group. I now have a Mental Health adviser whom is helping me to understand my individuality. Initiating conversations is still a challenge but I know that people can surprise you if you give them a chance".

5. Being Challenged to Change

"My anxiety pushes me to anticipate interruptions that could affect my plan for the day and this can be very discouraging. I learned that leaving my comfort zone allows me to adapt to new situations. I was pushed to use my organisation and planning skills, became creative and developed new solutions to my worries to ensure I have the most fun I can. These strategies prepared me for many situations".

Michal summarised his experience by saying that he set out to develop his gardening skills thinking this could improve his job prospects.

"I wanted to know it was ok to be myself and that my situation was not a reflection of failure."

"Fresh Start has encouraged me to pause and celebrate my achievements, improved my self-esteem and learned to appreciate working in team."

Michal has been awarded the SQA Personal Development Award Level 4 and also the Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS card) required to work on building sites. We are linking Michal with Morrisons Construction for a Joinery placement which Michal said he was interested in (the aim is that there is a job at the end of the placement). Michal is also working to finish the Adult Achievement Award.

Thinking ahead to his personal development Michal has resolved to continue to go out and meet new people, continue practising with his local community group and continue meeting with his Community Link Worker. He wants to learn more about how to manage his anxiety so he can gain more self-confidence and feel safe to go back into the work environment. He is thinking of an online anxiety course and a mindfulness course. He is committed to working with his mental health adviser and to continue volunteering at Fresh Start.

"I still have a long way to go but I am learning more about myself and gaining my confidence back".

For LCPP delivery group to complete

Date considered:

Is the priority on track? Y/N

Any decisions to be taken? (i.e. change of actions, escalation)

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Feedback to lead officer (if any)