



BEDFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL

## Minutes

Title of Meeting	Older People's Partnership Board	
Date/Time	Thursday 14 December 2023 @ 1:00pm	
Venue	In person – Committee Room 2, Borough Hall, Cauldwell Street, Bedford	
No	Item	Action
1	Welcome – Apologies were noted  Attendees were introduced and noted.	
2	Minutes of last meeting held on 8 September 2023  SW noted that the previous meeting had low attendance, however today's meeting has more successful attendance. One previous action related to: - MH to share the leaflets which had been produced on the OPPB in the hope that they stir interest and lead to new people joining the board. SW isn't aware if the leaflets had been shared since the last meeting, however Wilf reiterated the need to share the leaflets as soon as possible, in readiness for the next meeting date. <b>Action: The temporary Chair would discuss with the regular Chair to ensure this is actioned.</b>	SW/MH
3	ELFT Community Mental Health Services and support for Older People who live in Bedford Borough  A representative from ELFT verbally presented on ELFT community mental health services and support for older people in Bedford Borough. <b>Action: ELFT to provide presentation slides after the meeting for circulation to the board.</b>  ELFT is East London Foundation Trust, who have the contract for providing mental health services across Bedfordshire and Luton for adults. There are a number of services available for people over the age of 65 in Bedford. The first service relates to the Community Mental Health team, who support those who have an acute mental health need or secondary mental health need ie depression, anxiety or dementia. This team consists of Psychiatrists, social workers, support workers and care assistants, with the idea to support people in the early stages of their disorder. The ELFT representative advised that ELFT have seen an increase in referrals to the service since the pandemic. ELFT believe this is acutely due to loneliness and isolation caused by the pandemic. It was also advised that ELFT are also involved in a memory service, whereby it is typically accessed by people over the age 50. Referral to this service would be via the gp and would include an initial assessment. Depending on the complexity, a diagnosis may be advised straight away or further testing may be arranged. ELFT reiterated the support available, as well as the link with Carers in Beds alongside their memory team. There are also links to the fire service with their dementia service, and ELFT also work closely with Bedford Borough's social services around packages of care.	

	<p>ELFT also have a dementia support service, which can be accessed via self-referral. This service involves daily support to individuals with dementia and their families, with the aim to prevent the breakdown of the support in place within an individual's own home. ELFT also have a crisis service, which is specialist to older people.</p> <p>It was advised that some videos have been produced recently, which relate to the memory service, so that people are informed of what is involved at every step of the way throughout the process. The links to these videos will be passed to BMSO for sharing with the board.</p> <p>The Co Chair raised a query in respect of the crisis service, and asked what the timescale is for ELFT to be in touch with those in mental health crisis. ELFT said they would make contact within 4 hours and advised that the majority of referrals are self-referrals, either by an individual with dementia or family members.</p> <p>An attendee asked if there is anything Bedford Hospital could do to increase relations between ELFT and the hospital around dementia and support available. It was confirmed that this could be discussed separately.</p> <p>An attendee asked if the above support services exclude a number of people who potentially want to be referred who haven't been, potentially in different areas of the town or from different backgrounds. ELFT said they put in a bid for some funding relating to how we work together with disadvantaged groups, and in different areas of the town, with varied cultures or languages.</p> <p>An attendee said she is aware of some work previously undertaken in this regard and said it would be helpful to see any presentation of the results following this work. The Chair said it is a lengthy process to evidence this, however the organisation procured would need to evidence the work that is being undertaken with the contact/funding they receive.</p> <p>A representative from Carers in Beds also advised that they have employed a service to go out and meet people in the disadvantaged areas. ELFT confirmed they could also look to arrange regular sessions with those in different areas. A representative from Public Health, Bedford Borough said it's important that we link in with community initiatives already in place, rather than starting up something new.</p> <p>The Chair thanked ELFT for their updates.</p>	
4	<p>Understanding Older Persons Priorities – The Connolly Foundation</p> <p>A representative from the Connolly Foundation attended the board to provide more information on the Connolly Foundation, which is a charity whereby people apply to the foundation for funding and the trustees say yes or no to funding being provided.</p> <p>The representative said the foundation is keen to put in place some sort of strategy of key areas of focus to support older people outside of the statutory provision. At present, the foundation gives funding to some hospices in Bedfordshire (keech, sue ryder, moggerhanger) and have also donated some funding into Alzheimer's research. The foundation has also supported community transport, housing associations who run services for care homes, and also some funding for various support and befriending services. A list of perceived issues for older people has been put together, which includes advocacy, access to benefits, isolation/loneliness/social inclusion, transport, exercise/mobility, research into age related diseases and community support and befriending. The board were then asked which areas funding should be directed at.</p>	

	<p>An attendee thanked the Connelly Foundation for the slides and believes the issues presented are those areas to be focussed on most in terms of services and facilities available for older people. Wilf asked if it would be possible to add on 'older people and struggles with IT changes, access, knowledge'. Another attendee agreed with this.</p> <p>A representative from CVS asked if poverty comes into the centre of all of the issues and asked if this could be included. He also said around half of the charities have an income of under £25k so are quite small. However, there are also some larger organisations of support too. CVS also said the provision for older people has decreased significantly since the pandemic, whereby a lot of the social events for support are no longer available. It is believed that this also relates to the cost-of-living crisis.</p> <p>A representative from Public Health, Bedford Borough, advised that the council set up a 'warm spaces' scheme last year, which provided grants of £500 to each volunteering organisation to host one of these spaces. This was really successful, and we had around 30 organisations who took up this offer to provide the spaces needed. Ian confirmed that the scheme is running again this year, and the team recognise the social element was equally or more important, therefore the scheme has been renamed as 'welcoming spaces'.</p> <p>A representative from Carers in Beds also said one of the biggest things to be included is health, as they are aware that a lot of the carers are putting their own health on hold to care for people who are vulnerable. Sometimes the carers are more vulnerable than those who they are caring for.</p> <p><b>The Co Chair asked if it would be possible in between meetings, for MH, SW and himself to get together to put forward a portfolio of areas to focus on for this purpose.</b></p>	SW/MH/ WD
5	<p>Draft Health and Wellbeing Strategy</p> <p>A representative from Public Health, Bedford Borough, attended the board to present an update on the draft Health and Wellbeing Strategy. The representative has been asked on behalf of the Health and Wellbeing Board to update the strategy. The board includes ICB, Bedford Borough and Healthwatch colleagues, as well as elected members.</p> <p>The purpose of the strategy is for all parties to think about whether we're able to get the health care that we need as residents of Bedford Borough. Most of what makes us healthy is the environment we are in and also health behaviours. The aim is to work on what we can do together to influence those wider factors referred to as the building blocks of health, such as the difference between average life expectancy in different areas of the town, due to where people live and their surroundings. In Bedford, there are some of the biggest differences in the East of England.</p> <p>It was advised that we have now published the strategy, and this will be circulated with the minutes. There will need to be actions put in place, establishing some task and finish groups to look at how we can achieve the actions outlined. The aim is to close those gaps in unavoidable differences in Bedford, and also reduce the differences in life expectancy across the different areas.</p> <p>The Co Chair asked if the barriers have been identified in this regard. The Public Health representative said we've been through a process with stakeholders, health, voluntary sector and looked at the resources needed to deliver these objectives. However, at the moment the</p>	

	<p>challenge is money, workforce and capacity and burnout. A way around this is to work together and recognising where we have skills and capacity in the sector to support with these aims.</p> <p>The Co Chair also asked what gives us the confidence that this strategy will make the difference needed. The Public Health representative said the council as a whole are in support of this strategy, including the elected cabinet and management team. The team have also been engaging with the voluntary sector more than we've done before. Ian hopes this will be a good framework to make a difference.</p> <p>Another attendee commented that she and others will be sceptical about another strategy and lack of feedback on the successes of the work. She also commented that she believes it is needed to involve those in the more deprived areas to take pride in their areas in order to improve things. The Public Health rep said he can definitely come back to a future board and feedback on what has been done so far and any positive effects from the work that has been undertaken.</p> <p>A representative from Carers in Beds asked for more information on the welcoming spaces scheme this year. More information will be forwarded to BMSO to circulate after the meeting.</p>	
6	<p>AOB</p> <p>An attendee mentioned at the last meeting, the board discussed trying to engage new members and a leaflet would be shared in order to promote the board. As previously mentioned, SW would follow this up with MH.</p> <p>SW wished all attendees a Merry Christmas and a happy 2024.</p>	
7	Date of next meeting –To be confirmed – March 2024	