
GOOD FRIENDS - YEAR TWO EVALUATION

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. This report introduces the evaluation of the second year of operation of the Good Friends.

Summary

2. Good Friends is an initiative established by One Darlington Partnership in October 2013. The scheme, which is funded by a number public sector partners has grown rapidly and provides a vehicle through which residents of Darlington can provide support to their elderly and vulnerable neighbours.
3. In 2014 Good Friends won the Local Government Chronicle, Health and Social Care Award.
4. An Evaluation Framework was agreed at the outset of the initiative which has ensured the impact of the scheme has been continually monitored. The Year Two Evaluation is appended to this report.

Recommendation

5. The committee is recommended to receive this report for information

**Seth Pearson
Director, Darlington Partnership**

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| S17 Crime and Disorder | This report is for information and will have neither a positive or negative impact on Crime and Disorder |
| Health and Well Being | This report is for information and will have neither a positive or negative impact on Health and Well Being |
| Carbon Impact | This report is for information and will have neither a positive or negative impact on Caron Impact |
| Diversity | This report is for information and will have neither a positive or negative impact on Diversity |
| Wards Affected | This report is for information and will have neither a positive or negative impact on specific Wards |
| Groups Affected | This report is for information and will have neither a positive or negative impact on Groups |
| Budget and Policy Framework | This report outlines how the Council discharges the core function outlined in its Corporate Plan to “Support strong partnerships to set a vision and direction for the Borough” |
| Key Decision | This is not a key decision |
| Urgent Decision | This is not an urgent decision |
| One Darlington: Perfectly Placed | This report outlines the progress of an initiative that aims to Build Stronger Communities, a core objective of One Darlington : Perfectly Placed |
| Efficiency | The report highlights how other public agencies and other sectors are engaged to support the Council in addressing the needs of the residents of Darlington. |

MAIN REPORT

Background.

6. Darlington Borough Council has worked with its public, private and voluntary sector partners in One Darlington Partnership to create a good neighbour scheme, ‘Good Friends’.
7. At a meeting of stakeholders chaired by the Chairman of Darlington Partnership, the proposal was approved and the following organisations agreed to provide funding the first year as a pilot:

- (a) Darlington Borough Council
 - (b) Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust
 - (c) Tees Esk and Wear Valley NHS Foundation Trust
 - (d) Darlington Clinical Commissioning Group
 - (e) Durham Constabulary
8. Each of the supporting agencies committed £15,000 for the first, pilot year which they have renewed for the second year. (the Council's and the CCG's second year contribution has been through the Better Care Fund).
9. Good Friends provides a vehicle through which residents of Darlington can provide support to their elderly and vulnerable neighbours.
10. An innovative alliance between Age UK Darlington, the Police and Neighbourhood Watch, it was launched in October 2013 and has grown at an astonishing rate. As of January 2016, 852 Good Friends have been recruited supporting 601 elderly and vulnerable people in the community.
11. Darlington Borough Council agreed with its partners that building strong communities was an essential element of a thriving Darlington and is therefore a key feature of One Darlington Perfectly Placed. In no small part this objective has been a response to reduced public sector funding as strong communities are less likely to make expensive demands on Council or other statutory services.
12. From the outset Good Friends has not only aimed to support elderly and vulnerable people in the community but has specifically intended to help the public sector avoid cost and reduce demand. With 1,453 individuals now engaged it is therefore a significant tool in building stronger communities.

Progress

13. Winning the LGC Award for the best Health and Social Care project 2015 was an accolade for Good Friends, the Partnership and the many volunteers who have helped to make the project so successful to the benefit of Darlington and its most vulnerable citizens.
14. This last year has been a year of building upon our initial start and reinforcing the message that Good Friends is here to support older and vulnerable people in Darlington. Numbers of recipients and Good Friends can vary throughout the year but the cohort of volunteers and recipients is steadily increasing. The large number of beneficiaries and the immense social capital realised in this ground breaking project puts Darlington at the forefront of the move towards citizens becoming less reliant on public services and more aware of the needs of their neighbours.

Better Care Fund

15. In December 2014, £3.9m of existing health funding was allocated through the Better Care Fund to a partnership of Darlington Clinical Commissioning Group and Darlington Borough Council to transform the way we care for older people in the Borough and to transform the way that health services, care and support are

provided. The vision is to provide a patient centred approach to:

- (a) Improve patient experience
- (b) Provide more effective care planning and packages centred on individual needs
- (c) Provide care in the community or at home where preferred
- (d) Increase self-management
- (e) Increase involvement of the voluntary and community sector
- (f) Prevent unnecessary acute admissions/re-admissions to hospital
- (g) Reduce the length of stay (e.g. through 'in-reach')
- (h) Reduce the number of patients transferred to long term care.

16. Good Friends has been recognised as means of achieving the Better Care vision and therefore last year became part of the funded programme.

Conclusion

17. Good Friends has grown rapidly, now with 852 Good Friends recruited supporting 601 elderly and vulnerable people in the community.

18. Individuals receiving the help of Good Friend are self-reporting improvements in social interaction, confidence, health and wellbeing, self-worth and safety.

19. By winning a Local Government Chronicle Award it has been recognised nationally as the most worthy model of innovation in the field of Health and Social Care 2015.

20. It is a key tool in supporting the Council achieve its ambition of building stronger communities with 1,453 individuals now engaged.