



Meeting of the Health and Wellbeing Board at The Focolare Centre for Unity, 69 Parkway, Welwyn Garden City, AL8 6JG, on Wednesday 13 November 2013 AT 10.00 am

Item 2

Public Questions

At a meeting of the Board any member of the public who is a Hertfordshire resident or a registered local government elector of Hertfordshire may put a question to the Board about any matter over which the Board has power or which directly affects the health and wellbeing of the population. Written notice, including the text of the proposed question, must be given to the County Council's Chief Legal Officer at least 5 clear days before the meeting.

Public question received:

"Is the Board aware of the significant negative health implication of loneliness on older people (which is known to have the same impact on mortality as smoking 15 cigarettes a day) and if so, why it has chosen not to include any reference to the issue in its Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy, unlike 61 other health and wellbeing boards across England? Can the board set out its action plan for dealing with an issue that affects at least 30% of its older population?"

Response:

The Board is aware of the health implications of loneliness in older people and the population in general. Whilst our (Joint Health and Wellbeing) Strategy does not specifically highlight this as a theme, a preventative and life course approach has been taken to the strategy and loneliness is a consideration across the following priorities:

The theme *Flourishing Communities* highlights measures to help families to thrive, support carers to care and improve mental health and wellbeing. These include loneliness and isolation as key themes of why people need health and social care services. The theme *Independent Lives* focuses on improving the quality of life for people with dementia and their carers as well as long term conditions and people with disabilities.

Other themes consider the impact of lifestyle and environment on emotional as well as physical health, wellbeing and resilience. This includes citizens being active members of their communities including volunteering opportunities.

The NHS and Hertfordshire's local authorities already commission a wide range of universal services from the voluntary sector to address loneliness and support older people and their carers with organisations. Some £12m of grants and contracts are with organisations such as Age UK Herts, Alzheimer's Society, and Carers in Herts. Services include 82 luncheon clubs, volunteer befriending services, carers support and dementia cafes.

Hertfordshire's Multi agency *Ageing Well* strategy will be published in March 2014 to increase the empowerment of older people to live active, healthy lifestyles and limit deterioration and illness. 11% of people over 65 live alone in Hertfordshire and so decreasing social isolation and improving mental wellbeing in older people is an important consideration. An outcomes framework will be developed to target efforts to promote emotional wellbeing amongst older people.