

# ALTERNATIVE DAY CARE SERVICES FOR OLDER PEOPLE IN SOUTHCOTE TO COMBAT SOCIAL ISOLATION

## Purpose and Executive Summary

The Director of Education, Social Services and Housing, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Adult Social Care, have requested a case study of opportunities for older people to take part in Southcote as an alternative to day care provision.

## Policy Context

Putting People First concordat to support the transformation of Social Care, as outlined in the Health White Paper<sup>1</sup> underpinned the importance of social capital and making sure that everyone has the opportunity to be part of a community and experience the friendships and care that can come from families and friends. The Government has also recognised the importance of taking part in community activities stating that "loneliness and social isolation remains a huge problem that society has failed to tackle"<sup>2</sup>.

There is a wide range of evidence to show that social isolation can have a major detrimental impact on physical and emotional wellbeing. The Council aims to enable people to live independent and fulfilling lives for as long as possible, with little or no need for recourse to formal or statutory support services.

Locally, a priority for the Labour administration programme for 2012/13 includes working with local partners and voluntary organisations to support elderly people who are housebound or suffering from social isolation. This is also part of the Council's Prevention Framework, *Your Life Your Say*, whereby the Council supports voluntary and community groups to help older people stay physically and mentally active, and enjoy socialisation opportunities so promoting their emotional wellbeing.

## Current opportunities in Reading

A variety of activities and opportunities to socialise exist in Reading, covering a wide range of interests amongst vulnerable people and operating throughout Reading. These opportunities also give carers, many of whom are older people, the chance to take a break. There are a range of initiatives in Reading provided through a wide range of organisations - mainstream services, specialist provision commissioned through adult social care, and a myriad of services provided through the community including:

- Referral only services e.g.: lunch clubs and day centres

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<sup>1</sup> 'Our Health, Our Care, Our Say: a New Direction for Community Services' in 2006

<sup>2</sup> Care and Support White Paper, 2012 available at [http://www.dh.gov.uk/health/files/2012/07/2900021-CaringForFuture\\_ACCESSIBLE-10.07.2012.pdf](http://www.dh.gov.uk/health/files/2012/07/2900021-CaringForFuture_ACCESSIBLE-10.07.2012.pdf)

- Open access activity programmes aimed at older people such as the Sport Reading Active Ageing programme and independent and church based groups e.g. Firtree Retirement Club in Tilehurst, University of the Third Age; lunch clubs, retirement clubs (which offer activities such as dancing, singing and playing games), health and wellbeing programmes and carer peer support groups.
- Membership only groups;
- Activities provided within specific sheltered/extra care housing or residential care schemes; and
- Universal leisure opportunities, such as cinemas, museums, libraries adult education, and cafes

### Southcote (Demographic Summary)

From the 2011 Census:

- Social rented housing is higher in Southcote than the Reading average
- There is a higher level of carers, 10.2% compared with the 7.7% Reading average, with a higher proportion of these caring for over 50 hours per week
- Southcote has lower levels of reported good health
- It has the highest levels of economic inactivity as a result of ill health & experiences the highest levels of limiting long term illness
- Southcote has the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest proportion of population over 75 years old and a high number of pensioner households
- Southcote has a higher than average number of single parent households, 13.3% compared to the Reading wide number of 10.6%

The information in this briefing looks at services which are currently being offered in Southcote which are both funded and not funded by the Council.

To summarise:

- Southcote is one of the areas chosen by Circles Network for the time banking pilot due to its high level of pensioner population. Time banking is a means of exchange used where time is the principal currency. For every hour participants 'deposit' in a Timebank, perhaps by giving practical help and support to others in need.
- "Engage Befriending" operates a home visiting/befriending initiative aimed at isolated older people living in Reading Borough in Southcote. This is part of the wider Church based community development work happening in this area. The Churches also provide venues for a number of activities and are increasingly working on aiming their services not just at Churchgoers but the entire community. Via the Southcote Alive Community Alliance they are pulling the community together as seen through the successful 4 May Community Fayre.

- The Activities Service operating across the Council's sheltered housing schemes helps tenants and older people living in the neighbouring communities to enjoy social activities.
- Key local initiatives include the development of projects such as the Community choir - to be held at The Grange, Gardening Projects such as the Southcote Growalot and Diggers Old and New and the Southcote IT experience (SITE). These all provide intergenerational opportunities where older people can share experiences and life skills in exchange for companionship.
- This co production approach has exemplified the community development work in the area which has recently led to the refurbishment of the Community Centre which in turn is leading to the development of a new Community Association. Together the Centre and the Association are providing opportunities for older people to participate and for their needs to be taken into account in the development of future programmes. For example a dancing group for all ages is being developed, as well as a website and newsletter to communicate the varied community offer to all Southcote residents.
- Social action contact points, such as the Christian Community Action Café/Shop, the Community Centre, Southcote Advice Shop, and the library all provide important information and opportunities to associate for members of this community.
- The Southcote Networking group is a forum of community groups and residents and provides organisations with the opportunity to network and promote their services.
- For many organisations social activities are provided to supplement their core service. Most services are designed for older people, but there are also services specifically for carers, as seen through the weekly coffee mornings at the Advice Shop with Reading Crossroads.