



# MAKING CONNECTIONS

*"Coming together is a beginning, staying together is progress, and working together is success." – Henry Ford*

*We want to connect with the people most likely to be impacted and share important information about the support we have available in Doncaster*



- The Social & Digital Inclusion Workstream is part of the Wellbeing Essentials Group and combines the skills and resource of Team Doncaster partners to develop a collaborative approach to **reducing the consequences of social and digital isolation** for people in Doncaster.
- The Cost of Living crisis is likely to see an increase in our most vulnerable people feeling further isolated and not having access to information that can help them or the level of support they need.
- As more and more of our services are delivered online, it's important that we understand the impacts of digital service delivery and how to avoid this leading to poorer health outcomes and a lower life expectancy.
- We must try and avoid further excluding and isolating people through our increased use of digital services.
- Members of the workstream attend a Monthly task & finish group and Quarterly steering group combined with Health Inequalities.

## **Current Funding & Dedicated Resource:**

- Place Digital lead secured £270k to set up a two year Digital Inclusion programme 2022-2024 (through NHSE Digital Primary care funds)
  - This is non-recurrent funding
  - VAD recruited a Project Manager to oversee key activity (ends March 2024)
- Additional £32k funding secured by VAD (from the council) to deliver additional life and employment skills training in partnership with WEA
- No additional funding has been provided or pre-allocated for this workstream

## **Our Approach:**

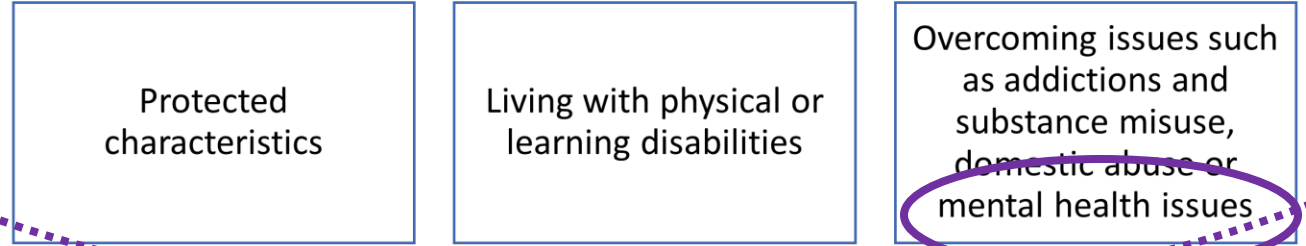
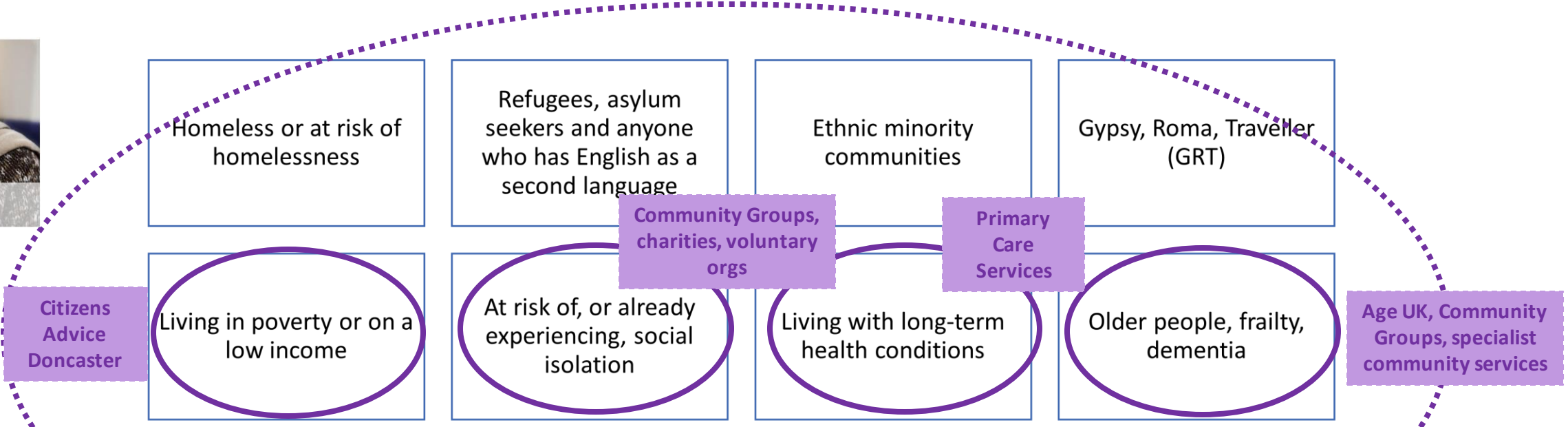
- Understanding the reasons why people are excluded / feel disconnected from information and services in Doncaster.
  - Being led by “resident voice” and local population health data
  - Identifying the groups we think are most likely to be at risk of being disconnected from information and services
- Making sure our support offer is flexible and meets the needs of individuals and addresses the reasons why they feel disconnected.
  - Delivering activity shaped and led by our communities, and supported with interventions from Partners
  - Providing support within community settings, using existing trusted relationships
- Short term response to key issues with a focus on the Cost of Living Crisis
- Planning a sustainable longer term model for supporting people at risk of exclusion



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**MIND, PFG specialist community & MH services**



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*What have we started to do to try to improve both our understanding and our support offer?*



## **Coming together to grow awareness of how we can reduce the consequence of social and digital isolation:**

- Members of the workstream meet on a monthly basis and the membership is growing
- We have improved links with the Team Doncaster communications workstream to help ensure we are communicating more effectively with partners and population
- Established a new CAB & VAD partnership to refer clients for data sims (national databank scheme), & energy scheme.
- Initiated CAB pilot – trialling CAB specialist advisor presence in primary care locations (North PCN).
- Increased awareness of existing services and support so that we can be advocates and sign post people to relevant groups.

## **Baselining Activity to help us understand why people are disconnected from information, support & services and what kind of support they need:**

- We've started making connections with our most likely to be excluded groups to improve our understanding of why people may feel or be isolated & understand their priority requirements
- How Connected Are You Survey has been developed to help us understand more about data poverty and skills needs
  - Some surveys have already been completed as part of the new skills courses in East & North Doncaster
  - A small T&F Group is going to oversee the wider distribution of the survey and will look at how we can make sure it reaches the groups we most need to hear from.

## **Increasing our support offer to people who want to learn digital skills / grow confidence / feel safe using online services:**

- Two new digital skills courses have been set up in North and East Doncaster – with device incentives for learners (200 learners per course) – this needs to be replicated in Centra and South
- VAD have recruited a trainer on a fixed term 12 month contract, giving us extra flexibility to support our most likely to be excluded groups
- We will be starting a partnership with Barclays Digital Eagles to supplement the existing support in Doncaster
  - It is free
  - It is accessible to people where English is not their first spoken language
- VAD and Healthwatch working together to develop Online Safety sessions



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*How do we continue to work together to improve both our understanding and our support offer?*



When considering what recommendations to make around our continued efforts to reduce the consequences of social & digital isolation, please think about...

**How do we make sure REDUCING THE CONSEQUENCES OF SOCIAL & DIGITAL ISOLATION is a known priority and shared responsibility in Doncaster:**

**Possible Recommendations:**

- Secure commitment from Partners to support this workstream - All partners should embed the aim to reduce the consequences of social & digital isolation into their plans.
- All service providers in Doncaster should be members of the Social & Digital Inclusion workstream to keep sighted on latest issues, our support offers etc (this should be written into service specifications and contracts).

**How do we ensure the Social & Digital Inclusion workstream is sustainable?**

**Possible Recommendations:**

- Our focus needs to continue on providing support within our community centres, using existing voluntary resource who have already developed trusted relationships within our local neighbourhoods.
- Partners should come together to lobby for funding / support from wider sectors. *There is a risk we will lose momentum and will find it harder to make a positive impact if we do not have dedicated funding & resource to drive key activity across this workstream.*
- Actively look for funding opportunities so that we can continue to help fund the vital services being provided through charities (CAB), community groups and voluntary services to support those most in need.

**How we keep improving our understanding of why people are disconnected and what kind of support they need:**

**Possible Recommendations:**

- Continue baselining activity with existing forums / groups where we can engage with older people to understand their needs and connect them to existing services & information.
- Nominate additional partners who should be involved in baselining activity.
- Share the persona profiles developed for the life stages with Partners so that they are considered more widely in service design and delivery.

**How do we improve the way we share information with people in Doncaster:**

**Possible Recommendations:**

- Support/find funding for the development of a wider comms campaign that will help to improve our sharing of information with individuals like Pat who are more likely to see information in a free newspaper, at her GP practice, or on the back of a bus.