

Joint Strategic Needs Assessment



Quarterly Newsletter / Issue 14

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Do you want to know more about loneliness and isolation in the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames?

Read on for more information about work to prevent loneliness and isolation

Welcome to the fourteenth issue of the JSNA Newsletter - a rolling publication produced by Public Health that describes the health, social care and wellbeing of local residents. In this issue we give an update on the needs analysis that is informing local efforts to prevent loneliness and isolation.

The terms 'loneliness' and 'isolation' are often used interchangeably. However, 'isolation' refers to separation from social or familial contact, community involvement, or access to services, whilst 'loneliness' relates to a lack of satisfying or rewarding relationships, and is about how that makes someone *feel*. Social isolation and loneliness impact upon individuals' quality of life, adversely affecting their health and wellbeing, and increasing their use of health and social care services. They also have a negative effect on mortality; research suggests that their influence on the risk of death is comparable with well-established risk factors such as smoking, alcohol consumption, physical inactivity and obesity. There is also some evidence to suggest that loneliness may exacerbate unhealthy behaviours, making it harder for people to regulate, for example, drinking, smoking or over-eating.

Tackling loneliness and isolation is a priority of the Health and Wellbeing Board, as they particularly affect the vulnerable in society, such as carers and older people. A lot of work has been undertaken to help understand this problem in Richmond, including training local residents as researchers and holding workshops with local groups.

If you would like to contribute to future editions of this JSNA newsletter please get in touch with us at jsna@richmond.gov.uk. We will gladly receive and consider your feedback, data, information and intelligence for future newsletter publications. The next newsletter will have a focus on healthy lifestyles.

Dr Dagmar Zeuner

Director of Public Health

London Borough of Richmond upon Thames

National and Local Strategies

The importance of tackling loneliness and isolation in Richmond upon Thames has been acknowledged in influential national and local strategic documents, including:

- *Campaign to End Loneliness and Isolation*
- *Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework 2013/2014 (inclusion of a measure of loneliness and social isolation)*
- *Health and Wellbeing Strategy*
- *Better Care Closer to Home: Richmond Out of Hospital Care Strategy 2014 - 2017*
- *The Annual Report of the Director of Public Health*
- *Promoting wellbeing and independence – an Integrated Prevention Strategy (Joint Council and CCG, Draft)*

Richmond approach to the prevention of loneliness and isolation

The issue of loneliness and isolation is highlighted as a priority in the Health and Wellbeing Strategy - Loneliness and isolation can be prevented and mitigated both by service-provision and strategies addressing some of the wider root causes.

This needs assessment sets out the challenges that require action to prevent and reduce the impact of loneliness and isolation in Richmond.

“ You sometimes feel you can miss out, when it's a lovely summer evening and you know for a fact people are down by the river with their friends or husband and you're sat in the house desperate to want to go out but you just wish you had a friend. ”

- A Richmond resident

Information was gathered by reviewing the literature (to understand what works and is effective) collecting local intelligence (to highlight the scale of the problem in Richmond) and holding a workshop to discuss the issue with local stakeholders. Local people were trained up and sent out into the community (peer researchers) to talk to both lonely and connected people, to help understand the barriers and opportunities in Richmond (see box for example). The assessment was asset based – looking at what is working and what we can build on to tackle this problem.

Snapshots

National and local figures

Nationally:

- Nearly half (49%) of all people aged 75 and over live alone
- 6% of older people (nearly 600,000) leave their house once a week or less.
- 17% of older people have less than weekly contact with family, friends and neighbours.
- 12% of older people feel trapped in their own home.

In Richmond:

- Under half of adult social care users feel they do not have as much social contact as they would like.
- Richmond has the highest proportion of people aged over 75 and living alone in London (51% in Richmond vs. 35% for London). This equates to 6,400 people.
- The wards of Kew, Barnes and Hampton North have the highest estimated numbers of residents aged 85 and over, at around 240 for each of these areas.

Richmond people identified a wealth of assets that could help reduce loneliness and isolation:

Individuals - strong volunteering ethos, residents being relatively healthy, educated and highly skilled, and a strong sense of community.

Communities - lunch clubs, neighbourhood care groups, self-help groups and befriending services.

Organisations - theatres and cinemas, friendly gyms, church groups, coffee groups and libraries.

Barriers to accessing local assets

- Lack of awareness of options
- Financial barriers for individuals who are on a low income
- Appropriateness and appeal of services aimed at older people
- Confidence and companions to attend new places and resistance to change
- Lack of transport

Health effects

- Early death
 - Functional decline
 - Earlier occurrence of age related diseases
 - Cardiovascular problems
 - Depression
 - High blood pressure
 - More negative and fewer positive emotions
 - Reduced capacity for physical activity
 - Impaired immune response
- There is also evidence that loneliness is associated with, and can be predictive of, dementia.

Populations at risk

- People aged 75 years and over
 - Older people in ethnic minority communities
 - Women are more at risk than men
 - Lesbian, gay, transsexual and bisexual people
 - Those living alone
 - People transitioning into or out of being a carer
 - Those in poor health or disability
 - Those living in an area of deprivation.
- Among older people, not having a partner or being in a nursing home are associated with a greater likelihood of loneliness.

Services and initiatives in Richmond

- Befriending services
- Borough Champion for older residents
- Introducers' initiative (introducing older people to social clubs and activities in their local community)
- Computer facilities and ICT training for older people
- Physical activity initiatives to promote social networking, e.g., Healthy Walks
- Social clubs and centres for older people.

What next?

JSNA Seminar

Thank you all for attending the JSNA Seminar and sharing your views! A report summarising the discussions, feedback and response will be published shortly, alongside the presentation slides which can be accessed here: www.datarich.info/jsna/seminar20150119

A follow-up seminar is planned for later in the year – details coming soon...

Future needs assessments

Throughout the year short topic-based reports are published on the Local Authority's website, enabling key messages to be shared with local partners. Topics that are planned for future JSNA reports and newsletters include:

- *Health and wellbeing of school age children*
- *Healthy lifestyle*
- *Mental health and wellbeing*
- *Obesity (adults)*
- *Substance misuse*
- *Urgent care (children age 0-5)*

Look out for our newsletters and have a look at some of the resources we have highlighted below. All health needs assessments and quarterly newsletters are available via: www.richmond.gov.uk/jsna.

Further resources

- *The Annual Report of the Director of Public Health*
www.richmond.gov.uk/annual_public_health_report
 - *Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2013-16*
www.richmond.gov.uk/joint_health_and_wellbeing_strategy
 - *Promoting wellbeing and independence – an Integrated Prevention Strategy (DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION) -*
consultation.richmond.gov.uk/acs/draft-prevention
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Contact us

If you have any topics or issues you think the JSNA team could analyse, or if you would like to get involved in any of the work currently underway, please email us at:

jsna@richmond.gov.uk