

Eden Health and Wellbeing Forum 23.9.2021

Chair: Judith Derbyshire (EDC), Present: Hilary Snell (Penrith TC), Anna Sives (Eden PCN), Kate Rees, Danni Leslie (Eden Carers), Catherine Beckett (Public Health), Oliver Carswell (Sports), Phil Dew (EDC, CCC), Elizabeth Walker (?CCC), Amy Frith, Michael Hanley (EDC).

Report by Michael Hanley.

1. Covid Report: Catherine Beckett

Prior to the previous week there had been an increase (7%) in Covid cases but recently there had been a fall in Eden. In the last week there were 155 cases (288/100k). This is better than Cumbria as a whole: 406/100k and England: 510/100k. Carlisle has had the biggest increase with 22%. There has been a high rate in young people going back to school. The under 50s are 71% of cases. There has been an increase of 14 cases admitted to hospital. 95% of the eligible Eden population have had their first vaccination, 93% of Cumbria. 88% of Eden residents have had their second vaccine. There are a few areas where there needs to be improvement: Alston, Penrith South and Penrith West. CB thought that the lower rate in Alston may be due to a local person dying due to the Covid vaccine. Anna Sives said that Alston Medical Practice had done a brilliant job in vaccinating a lot of their patients and wondered whether the lower rates were in the under 50s as the practice had given vaccines mostly to the over 50 year olds. AS said the booster vaccines would be started in the next week. If your second vaccine was more than six months ago you would be called. The flu vaccine could be given at the same time. Parental consent would be needed for vaccination of 12-15 year olds. There is very little vaccine reluctance in this age group.

2. Forum Priorities

JD: Virginia Taylor (EDC leader) had arranged for the forum to feed into a central point. We have not got the manpower to do certain things. We want to tackle: poverty, youth unemployment, improving mental health, loneliness, obesity, social prescribing, unhealthy eating and falls in the elderly. Hilary Snell discussed Linking Lives. She attended a conference on tackling loneliness which had a strong church/religious connection and she thought this might put some people off.

CB: Linking Lives is run through the churches and will be developed in Penrith. It is a voluntary organisation. The primary purpose is not to promote religion. Dani Leslie: Linking Lives is a religious group that does not preclude non-religious people. Oliver Carswell: Discussed Walking for Health. There is an effort to get new groups going. There is new training for Walk Leaders.

Angling groups are being encouraged to take a person fishing to help with loneliness. JD: There is a new group called Black Dog Outdoors to help people with mental illness to get out. AS: There is a local minister who is pointing lonely people to these services.

Phil Dew: Said he shared some reservation about the religious feel to Linking Lives (despite having been a Methodist minister himself). It just depends on how overtly evangelical they are. There is a need to keep an eye on whether they are being used as a cover to convert people.

HS: We have quite a few Muslim families in Penrith. Last year some Muslim families were put off because their children were being taught Christian stories during summer school.

JD: Rural transport has come up as a major issue in a lot of rural areas.

PD: This is a persistent problem, various schemes have been tried. I drive the community bus but people don't use it. Often there are only 2-3 passengers on the bus.

HS: There is LGBT support in Kendal and Carlisle but none in Penrith.

OC: LGBT physical activity groups have started in Carlisle, if similar groups are required in Eden, we could get funding for this.

AS: We don't have room in the hospital to do lots of things such as ambulatory care (PEG tubes,

blood transfusions). The old fire-station next door is unused and could help, but we don't have the funding.

Elizabeth Walker: We are aware of the lack of support for LGBT people and there are plans to rectify this. OC: I will have to discuss this with you to set up an activity group.

AS: We check the heating when we do visits (to the frail elderly). Patients are sometimes reluctant and a care coordinator often makes the referral.

JD: I went to a BMA conference a few years ago in London and gave a presentation with a video from Dr Ashley Liston about ways of improving warmth for the elderly. JD went on to ask where to go to get electric blankets tested. EW: We are looking at putting talks on mindfulness and other things.

3. Local Government Reorganisation.

JD discussed what is going on. HS: We are linked with Barrow which will not help services. It will start in March 2023. There will be fewer councillors who will have a lot more work.

JD: There are concerns about the reduced number of councillors, it will be a full time job and you will not have many young people coming forward. CB: It is a concern that Eden will get lost.

EW: I have been working with Dr Venetia Young looking at developing courses. These will explore healthy relationships. There has been a big increase in domestic violence during the pandemic.

JD: There is the Domestic Abuse Forum and you could link in with this. There is a need to link in with schools to provide education on domestic abuse and healthy relationships.

DL: Patients are being discharged too soon from the hospital and are boomeranging back in again.

AS talked about a hate campaign against GPs (to do with reduced face-to-face consultations). It is important to oppose this as GPs have been working just as hard through the whole of the pandemic and reduced direct contact has meant that few surgeries have had to close their doors due to Covid infection among staff.

Next meeting: 3pm, 25th November 2021.