

**Strategic Review of Talk  
Community**  
**Health, Care and Wellbeing  
Scrutiny Committee**  
**29th January 2024**

# Strategic Review of Talk Community

Talk Community has been operational for three years, delivering many benefits for Herefordshire residents across all ages.

The landscape continues to change and evolve, with resource demand pressures and level of need increasing. The time is now right to ensure that the model and approach is fit for purpose to contribute to prevention and reducing demand on statutory services (social care and health) going forward.

The review will seek to:

- understand the impact of Talk Community against the aims and objectives agreed by the council in 2020
- make visible and understand the value of Talk Community and its impact
- confirm current and future drivers to inform the model of community engagement to secure maximum impact on reducing demand



# Aim and methodology

## Aim

Develop a long term, evidence based strategy to guide the Talk Community (TC) approach for the next three years to ensure we maximise the council's contribution to prevention, reducing demand and improving health inequalities. Put in place a robust evaluation and impact measurement framework for TC for the future

## Methodology

- undertake an analysis of the external policy landscape within which TC operates;
- collect and analyse quantitative and qualitative data held by TC to understand reach and impact;
- seek views from stakeholders, internal and external to the council;
- engage with TC Hubs, TC volunteers and TC beneficiaries; and
- assess use and value of the TC website and directory.



# Strategic context

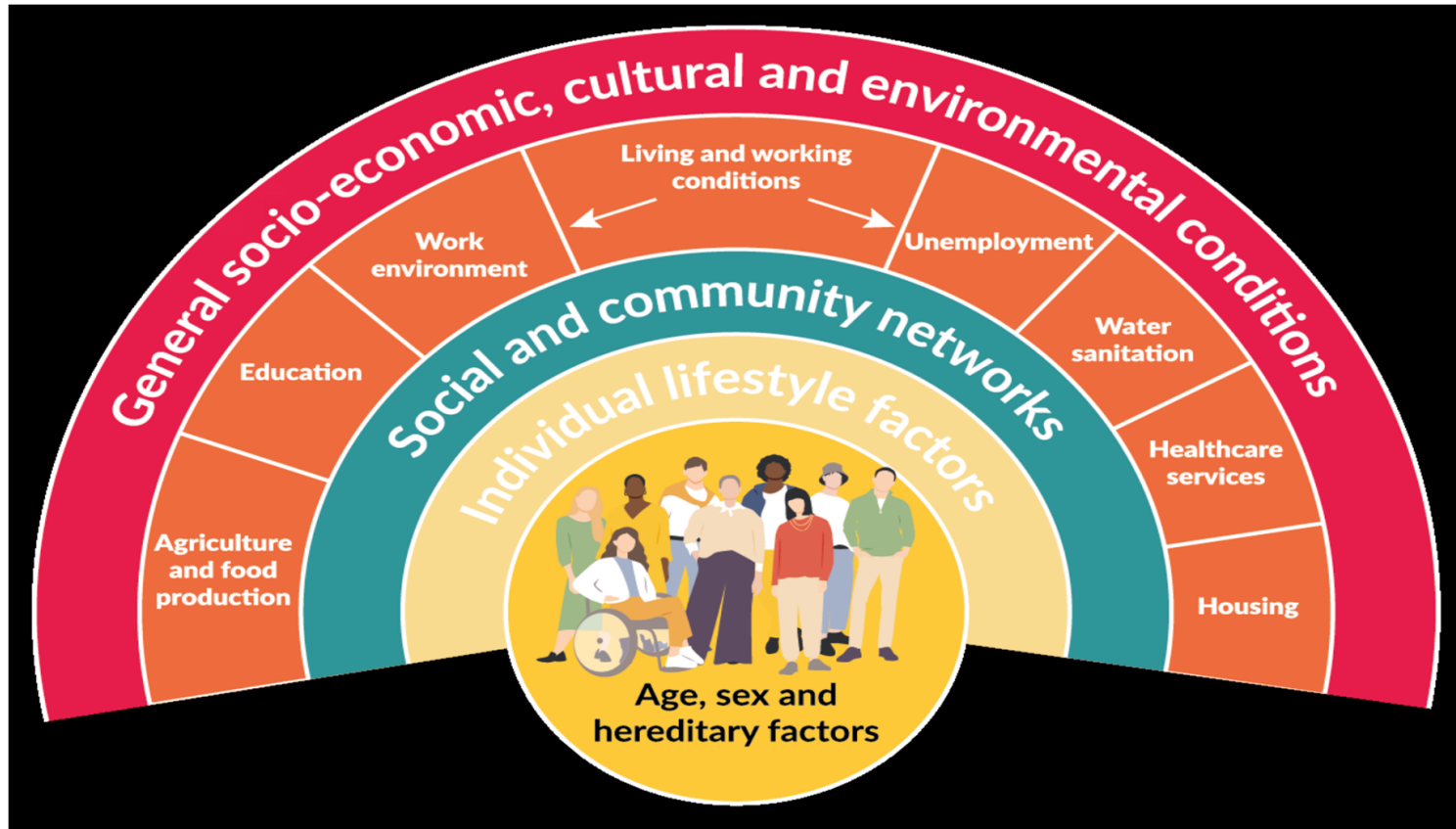
The council has key responsibilities around prevention, wellbeing and partnerships as detailed in the Care Act 2014.

These general duties are:

- promoting individual wellbeing
- preventing needs for care and support
- promoting integration of care and support with health services
- providing information and advice
- promoting diversity and quality in provision of services
- co-operating
- safeguarding adults at risk of abuse or neglect



# Need



# Vision, aims and outcomes

## Vision

Building stronger, more connected communities where everyone can thrive

## Aims

Right support in the right place at the right time that:

- Promotes and facilitates independence and wellbeing across all ages
- Puts wellbeing, social value and strengths based approaches in all practice, policy and decision making
- Ensures that early prevention and early intervention are prioritised by connecting people into communities
- Applies a whole population approach that targets and reduces health and social inequalities
- Helps to bridge the gaps in health and wellbeing; care and quality; funding and finance

## Outcomes

- People generally remaining well, active and independent for longer within in their local communities
- More people better informed and supported to self-care and self-help to help prevent onset of and deterioration from long term conditions
- Vulnerable people being supported informally in their communities and making less use of formal care
- Reduction in the numbers feeling lonely and isolated
- Increased resilience and capacity in communities



# Delivery model

## ***Who we are:***

- 5 x Development Officers working across each PCN
- 4 x Community Brokers working with adult social care
- 2 x Engagement officers (Including website, directory and newsletter)
- Lead officer children and families
- Management team

## ***What we do***

- Enhance community relationships
- Facilitate partnerships
- Identify and respond to gaps at local level, facilitating statutory agencies to engage more effectively with communities
- Promote community cohesion
- Support community action and advocate for community interests – with information, funding and building relationships
- Distribute national funding informed by identified local needs (HAF, Covid Recovery, Cost of Living, UKSPF etc).
- Strengthen community networks
- Provide information and resources



**We asked our community groups what Talk Community was to them:**





# Talk Community Hubs

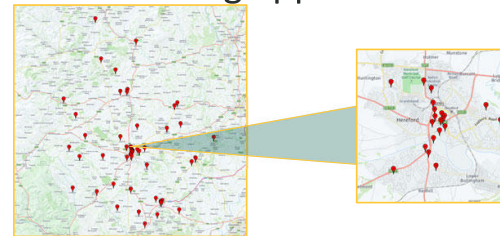
## Where we started ...

The core aims for Talk Community hubs agreed in 2020

- to help people in communities to stay well, active and independent
- to help reduce and defer the need for formal health and social care/support and people with existing support needs to stay independent and living at home for as long as possible
- to enable communities to build their resilience and support their local vulnerable people
- to facilitate/enable people to be supported by their communities, within their communities at places where they go

## Where we are ...

- 75 hubs across Herefordshire
- 25,000 visits per annum to a Talk Community Hub and being connected to support
- Driven by, and for the community with Talk Community providing essential support:
  - Seed funding
  - Engagement Assistance
  - Networking opportunities
  - Funding applications



# Hub case study

## Context

A lady visited a hub running a warm space to charge her phone and find warmth

### Issues

She shared her circumstances with a volunteer – that she had been made homeless and was sleeping in her car

### Support

The hub connected her with the food bank for a food parcel and helped her find temporary accommodation. She was given warm clothes and help in claiming Universal Credit. She was helped to apply for financial assistance through the Household Support Fund.

### Outcome

The TC Hubs work closely together, coordinating wrap-around support. She is volunteering at the hub and being given training and employment opportunities, and building connections within her community.

# Community Debt Centres

Located in Hereford and market towns for residents seeking early debt and financial assistance

## Residents that have benefited:

Number of households	3931
Number of adults	4052
Number of children	4079
Number of pensioners	1752
Number with a disabled Person	2193

£749,666  
Debt supported with

£303,518  
Financial gain to clients

## Households supported with the following advice:

Debt	1328
Household bills	1298
Council tax	827
Benefits checks	2667
Other	1333

# Debt Centre case study

## Context

A referral came from the local authority for a man who had been ill and had to take time off work

### Issues

He was unable to cope financially. He was suicidal, threatening to jump on the railway track

### Support

We were able to give him immediate food and working alongside other agencies we ensured he was able to claim the benefits he had not claimed and sort the debt he had amassed

### Outcome

As his health improved he was able to go back to work and his financial situation was resolved

# Community Action Network Meetings

Bringing together community, third sector and statutory services to connect with peers, share knowledge, ideas and experiences, identify and prioritise local challenges within PCN areas.

- **Average rating of CAN Meetings: 4.3 out of 5 stars**
- Through working with Talk Community those surveyed say they have:
  - Learned about other relevant work in the community: 89%
  - Connected with new services and organisations: 83%
  - Engaged more effectively with the community or partner organisations: 74%
  - Explored opportunities for wider partnership working: 71%
  - Had advice about funding, income generation or sustainability: 61%
  - Had support to develop a new project or idea: 50%
  - Received information or advice about setting up or developing their organisation: 49%
  - Accessed training or received information about training opportunities: 45%
  - Had the opportunity to influence/be involved in planning future service delivery: 35%

# Funding delivery

## HAF (£1.1 million)

- 25,150 HAF activity places have been booked to date; all included a nutritious meal
- Two fully booked family open days have taken place with 25 activities providers, 7 food and drink providers with 350 children in attendance at each.
- 40 quality assured providers
- Average 1497 children per programme
- 177 children with SEND per programme

## Household Support Fund (£5.1 million)

2022 - 2023

- 9,370 holiday FSM vouchers
- 3,200 Pension vouchers
- 6,662 food vouchers
- 1,519 energy costs
- 1,219 essential items
- 233 care experienced young people
- 1066 family food shops
- 560 emergency payments
- 83 WOW events

2023 – 2024

- 9 different programmes of delivery underway

## COVID Recovery (£2 million)

- £460,000 Community grants
- Digital Exclusion training and support – through AGE UK (380 Total beneficiaries)
- Partnered with HALO to offer free family swims, swimming lessons for adults, gym memberships for teens, community thank you events
- Partnered with Stride Active to fund the active schools programme
- Mental health support for children and Young People
- Cost of living support

# Talk community Directory



Over 800 Services &  
Organisations  
390 events listed each  
month

200% increase on  
hits and visitors  
to website in 12  
months

Over 3000  
newsletters  
read each  
month

# Additional projects

## Let's Talk

A project to engage with children, young people and their families and find out what living in Herefordshire is really like for them

**18** community events delivered  
**14** focus groups were held  
**1054** survey responses

## Money on your Mind

A self-serve toolkit providing easy access to a wealth of local information and resources to assist residents overcome financial difficulties.

**25,035** hits

## Cost of Living Roadshows

Improve access to cost of living support for residents by bringing advice and information directly to them.

**17** events held  
**400+** people supported  
**45** Agencies supporting

## Early Homeless Prevention

A fixed-term role specifically designed to help those at risk of homelessness at the earliest possible stage.

Working in partnership with other agencies to support at least 22 individuals at risk of homelessness

## Connecting Business and Charity

Initiative to bring our local businesses and charities together

LinkedIn group with **255 members**  
**4** Networking events held

## Loyal Free

An app which supports the local high street and tourism

**271** businesses promoted  
**1,451** Registered Users  
**7,847** trail interactions  
**1,631** in-app competition entries



# Additional projects

## State of the Sector Survey

- Research undertaken by Impact consultancy on behalf of HC
- Have a greater understanding of the VCSE sector at county and primary care network level

## Funding Support

- Grants online tool
- Local funders forum
- 121 support

## QCWBR

Organised a large scale community event to celebrate the Queen's Commonwealth Baton Relay visiting Herefordshire

## Community Wellbeing Survey

*"Improve understanding of the wellbeing and resilience of Herefordshire's communities, and the residents living in them both prior to and during the emergencies (flooding and Covid-19) in the county during 2020 and 2021."*

## Campaigns/materials

Focus on health, wellbeing and community initiatives

- Social media campaigns
- Focused website campaigns
- Leaflets/ posters/ advice packs

## Talk Parish

Coordinating quarterly parish summits, aiming to foster collaboration and communication between parish and town councils and Herefordshire Council

# Talk Community Brokers

The core role of the TC Broker is to link the Herefordshire residents most in need to community groups and services

- Provide a community offer alongside that statutory care package
- Adhoc requests from ART and other colleagues in the Herefordshire Council
- Maintaining a database of services

160

Support plans per  
month

92

Adhoc request per  
month



# Case study – Youth

## Context

Large village in Herefordshire experiencing a huge rise in demand for youth mental health support an unmet need for sexual health

## Issues

- Young people have no mental or sexual health services locally
- Travel to nearest support either not possible or not appropriate

## Action Taken

- Worked with local groups to identify the specific needs
- Identified and met with services to support
- Training organized for volunteers to support the mental and sexual health needs of young people
- Connected the youth groups with those services

## Outcome

- Volunteers receiving training from sexual health services
- Direct support for young people from CLD
- Volunteers more equipped to support the young people

*“Talk Community have enabled us to make brilliant connections, extending our reach and helping more people”*

# Case study – Market Town

## Context

A Volunteer based community group in a market town running a weekly 'warm welcome' providing warmth, warm food, support and advice

## Issues

- Limited volunteer capacity
- Large numbers of Neets attending
- Multiple and diverse needs presenting

## Action Taken

- Worked with local groups to identify the specific needs
- Linked in with landau for Neet support
- Connected other teams to support residents with advice
  - Talk Community Homelessness Prevention
  - Healthy lifestyles Team
  - Taurus social prescribers

## Outcome

Young people getting support with

- CV writing
- Confidence and skills building
- Employability skills
- Rent/housing issues
- Children's services signposting to the group

*"I actually can't think of any further support I could get. Talk community has been so helpful and inclusive"*

# Case study – Funding

## Context

Community group supporting young and young adult carers

### Issues

- Limited access to funding as a community group
- Reliant on other organizations to host bank account and services for them

### Action Taken

- Explored all options around the structure of the group and setting up own entity
- Provided advice and support on different constituted structures e.g. charity or social enterprise
- Identified appropriate grants for new project

### Outcome

- Successful registered as a social enterprise with a business bank account
- Applications for grant funding submitted
- The group has confidence and knowledge of running a CiC

*“Thank you so much for your help and support as always!”*

# Talk Community has supported...

3931

households to benefit from financial advice through community debt centres

1937

residents attending Healthy Lifestyle Training in hubs

460

residents through cost of living roadshows

203,150

hits recorded on the Talk Community Directory

128

healthy lifestyle groups active in hubs

782

community groups with funding advice

25,150

Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) places, booked

# Talk Community has supported...

75

Talk Community Hubs  
and digital access  
points

254

volunteers trained in  
mental  
health/awareness/  
first aid

268

volunteers trained in  
provision of financial  
advice

25,000

people per annum  
attending a Talk  
Community Hub and  
being connected to  
support

342

volunteers  
supporting Talk  
Community Hubs

62

Community Action  
meetings held per  
annum

7,330

drop in sessions per  
annum

# Issues

End of national funding in March 2024 – c£8.2m investment in community organisations and support

Detailed and robust understanding of ‘prevention’ need

Strategic framework for prevention not explicit, shared and understood

How to evaluate the impact of work to reduce ‘prevention’

How to collect and use community ‘intelligence’ systematically to influence strategic and operational planning