

**Cafe
Conversation
14.09.2017**



Purpose

Following an in-depth evaluation of the Seniors Together befriending project, the key findings highlighted the positive impact experienced by all those involved; both older people and volunteers.

We want to use this learning to design a collective and sustainable approach to older people's services and encourage greater social connections.

How do we achieve this?

The first step in this journey was hosting café conversations with local organisations and groups in East Renfrewshire. Our aims were to encourage organisations to work with others and increase awareness around the subject of connecting people.



On the day...

On the 14 September, we held our first Café Conversation in Barrhead. Over 20 representatives* from local groups and organisations came together to talk about social connections in East Renfrewshire.

With a cup of tea and biscuit in hand, we explored the three following questions:

- 1. What does connecting people mean to you or your organisation?**
- 2. How can we better connect people in East Renfrewshire?**
- 3. How can we work together to connect people in East Renfrewshire?**

The vibrant atmosphere suggested people were keen to help their community be more connected as well as connect with each other. As the groups discussed each question, a lot of ideas were shared, such as a “Connect 4” service.

People discussed what currently works well in East Renfrewshire but also the barriers that prevent people from taking part in community activities.

This is an overview of the discussions.

* A list of those who were in attendance on the day can be found in Appendix 1

SERVICE

I/WE DO NOT PROVIDE
A SERVICE TO ANYONE

NOT INTERESTED IN
PROVIDING ANY

NOT PROVIDING
A SERVICE BUT
INTERESTED

I/WE ARE PROVIDING
A SERVICE AND WOULD
LIKE TO DO MORE

I/WE ARE
PROVIDING A
SERVICE BUT NOT
INTERESTED IN
DOING MORE

AGE OF CLIENT GROUP

85+

50-84

19-50

0-18

NO
DIRECT
SUPPORT

PRACTICAL
SUPPORT

EMOTIONAL
SUPPORT

SOCIAL
SUPPORT

MENTAL
HEALTH

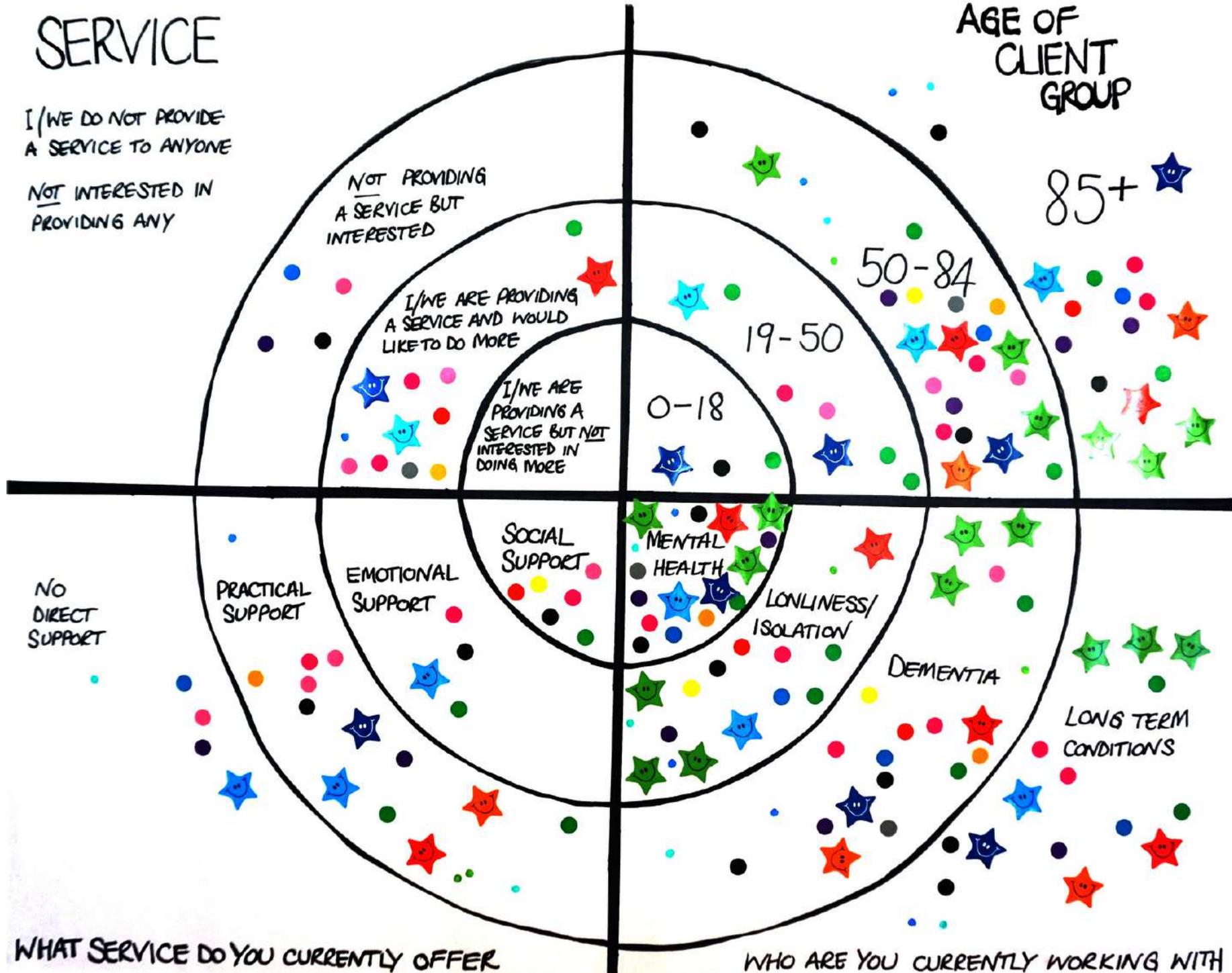
LONLINESS/
ISOLATION

DEMENTIA

LONG TERM
CONDITIONS

WHAT SERVICE DO YOU CURRENTLY OFFER

WHO ARE YOU CURRENTLY WORKING WITH



Q1

What does connecting people mean to you/your organisation?

This question provided varied conversation and the groups were reminded that it wasn't about 'what helps connect people' (we would get to that) but what it actually means. People spoke of social connections beginning in communities but that it also means feeling included, finding ways of linking people and volunteering.

"Linking one person or one group of people to other like-minded people...identifying needs"

"All for their enjoyment together...groups"

"Helping people to feel part of the Church & our community"

"Having resources in community for communities by communities"

"Joining people & services"

"Identifying need & identifying volunteers"

"Making connections...staying connected"

"Groups for all...no stigma"



Q1

Connecting people also meant knowing what individuals needed and also making sure they could access information.

"Making people aware of what's available"

"Knowing what people want & need"

"Lots of jargon...need good communication & signposting"

"Information = choice"

"Making older people aware of organisations in their communities... passing email notifications to folks who are not familiar with it (organisation)"

As the discussion evolved, people talked about the practicalities of connecting people and where the challenges are.

"What are barriers for a person connecting?"

"Leadership...we need someone to co-ordinate"

"Transport Issues & Need support to get there"

"Not everyone wants to do groups...people are individuals"

"Thinking about access...ramps/ steps"

"Dementia/conditions a barrier to connection/ stigma makes it scary"

Q2

How can we better connect people in East Renfrewshire?

There are lots of good things already happening in East Renfrewshire. Everyone was eager to discuss these and how they could be even better.



“Walking groups encouraging volunteers to lead/assist with groups or individuals. Putting elderly people in touch with others by telephone so two can chat regularly to each other”

“Give a Dog a Bone...Busby Memory Lane...Mearns Coffee Club”

“Go to where people are already e.g. community groups!”

“Transport...weekly meeting...wider than church membership...weekly progress (different each week)...referrals via social work department”

“Find ways of giving recognition & support to what's already happening at a community level”

Q2

Information, and how to communicate it, was key to better connecting people. This was talked about in a variety of ways: using word of mouth, social media and having more opportunities like this event to bring people together.

"Speaking to rather than writing to or providing flyers which can end up in the recycle bin!"

"(directory) do all know it changes...some may not access...digital not best for everyone"

"Raising awareness through different mediums...technology, social media"

"Adverts for groups in news...for an activity Chair Based Exercise...not saying it's for being lonely"

"Up to date information...knowing what's out there"

"Digital solutions facetime/skype, online shopping"

"Initial friendship helps widen connections...find out more info"



Q2

This was also an opportunity to be creative and consideration was given to what could be done differently to better connect people.



"Inter-generational projects, playgroups...using older volunteers, scouts etc...attending care homes"

"Have informal café sessions inviting individuals & group leaders"

"Gather information about who is 'out there' in the community"

"Info Hub, asset mapping, who is going to pay for this?...access info on room rent community"

"Ask the community: what do you want/need instead of setting up a group because of your interest"

Q3

How can we work together to connect people in East Renfrewshire?

There was universal agreement that networking is essential to bring people together and help develop partnerships. This could be done by bringing those with similar aims/interests together and making best use of the resources we already have.

"Bring groups together who are doing the same thing...Already happening 'Walking groups' 'Alz Scot'...How can we do this?"

"Organisations coming together to build a communication plan & it can be sustained for services & activities"

"Work with other groups and provide information and give talks to groups about services"

"Social element key to getting folk to work together...cheese and wine night"

"More Café conversation type events"

"Partnership...bringing public/voluntary sector together"



Discussions also raised the challenges that working in partnerships can bring and questioned how we could overcome these to work better collectively.

“Provide transparency: what happened to my feedback? What’s going to happen next?...need the right partners to lead”

“Who does it already? Who has the responsibility? - Organisations, council, community council?”

“People often want to work in isolation...fear factor in charge”

To work together effectively, we need to share information and resources. This is necessary for good communication and also to avoid duplication.

“Communication: can people access what’s already been said? Let’s not re-invent the wheel”

“Event...share info...widen audience...develop partnerships”

“Sharing is KEY...sharing ideas...sharing resources”

“Avoid duplication...two groups providing same service...combining resource”

Next Steps



From the above discussions we identified five 'key' questions to consider as we go forward:

How might communities be better supported to enable connections?

How might accurate information be provided in a way that is accessible to all?

How might we best find out the needs of community and design services accordingly?

How might we create a transport hub to connect people easily across East Renfrewshire?

How might we best use our skills and resources to work together more effectively?

So what next? We're keen to keep the conversations going but we're also conscious that we want to turn these conversations into actions!

- Based upon your opinions and ideas, we will hold more meet-up's and encourage more people and organisations to get involved
- We will co-facilitate groups for those interested in addressing a particular issue
- We will explore various platforms enabling involvement to ensure everyone can take part in our conversations

The above actions will allow us to work together and develop a programme of activity; creating practical and inspiring solutions to provide better social connections for people in East Renfrewshire.

We will be in touch again soon.
However, in the meantime, please keep the conversation going and keep in touch with us, either by contacting us directly by email/phone, visiting our website or through social media.

Voluntary Action East Renfrewshire SCIO

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Scottish Charity Number: SC028103

APPENDIX 1

VERBAL PERMISSION WAS GIVEN TO SHARE THESE CONTACTS WITH THOSE IN ATTENDANCE.

NAME

ORGANISATION

Richard Leckerman

Alzhiemers' Scotland

Frances Stewart

Arklet Housing Association

Margaret Grant

Barrhead St Andrews Church

Evelyn Baxter

Busby Community Council

Roy Baxter

Busby Community Council

Sheila Robertson

Caldwell Parish Church

Lynsey Ng

East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure

Elizabeth Smith

Maxwell Mearns Parish Church

Irene Munro

Newton Mearns Parish Church

Sine Delehunt

Paths for All / HSCP

Veronica Dunn

SDS Forum ER

Louise Russell

Give a dog a bone

NAME**ORGANISATION**

Louise Muir

Hanover Housing

Jim Brown

Hanover housing

Marry Kelly

Carole McBeath

Age Concern Woodfarm Lunch Club

Doreen Rennick

Barrhead BID

Ronald Whitelaw

Barrhead St Andrews Church

Lauren Jarvis

Cosgrove Care

Alison Anderson

Rainbow Volunteers

Doreen Watson

Thornliebank Parish Church

Kate Robertson

Outside the Box

Jill Keegan

Outside the Box

Jacqui Heron

RAMH