

## LET'S WORK TOGETHER

**Submitted by:** Head of Business Improvement and Partnerships – Mark Bailey

**Ward(s) affected:** All

### **Purpose of the Report**

To provide the Committee with an update and summary of the Let's Work Together (LWT) initiative.

LWT is an initiative which is designed to ensure that home visitors (covering a range of staff from different organisations including the Borough Council) are equipped with the *basic* skills to spot hazards in and around the home. These hazards may relate to the safety, health and wellbeing of the occupant of the home in question. In addition, LWT seeks to provide the necessary tools for the home visitor to deal with the situation they are aware of, mainly in the form of referring the occupant to the most appropriate agency and also recording the visit in a format which is accessible and useful to others.

The LWT initiative itself has been built on a number of previous awareness raising initiatives including 'Olive Branch' (led by the Fire Service and designed to highlight fire hazards) and individual pieces of work, including initiatives from the health service and others around helping people who fall and injure themselves at home due to medical conditions or other factors. LWT sought to bring these areas of work together under one heading with the aim – as the title says – of encouraging organisations to work together better, share information more effectively and train staff appropriately in order to protect people in their homes and allow them to live independently.

LWT was first piloted in Staffordshire in Lichfield from mid 2010 onwards, and was formally launched in January 2012 – an event which was attended by all public sector agencies in Staffordshire including representatives from this Council. The stated intention at the launch event was to roll out the scheme to all parts of the county. To this end, an initial steering group was established in Newcastle made up of key partners to explore the potential to implement LWT in the Borough. This group has now met on a number of occasions, and LWT is now one of the 'Priority Projects' of the Newcastle Partnership – as agreed by the Strategic Board in April 2012.

Following this initial work, LWT was launched in Newcastle in November 2012, and the first training module took place on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2013.

### **Recommendations**

- (a) That the Committee notes the report and the outline of the LWT initiative**
- (b) That the Committee further notes the initial training module held on 28 February around safety issues such as identifying fire hazards and spotting the signs of anti-social behaviour.**
- (c) That the Committee makes any comments or suggestions in relation to the future development of LWT, including the development of further training modules**

### **Reasons**

LWT is a key part of the NBC Stronger and Safer Communities Strategy 2012-2017, and the Newcastle Partnership Work Programme. It is also a key part of the development of a prevention agenda for the Borough in terms of community safety and public health agendas.

This report outlines LWT and asks Members to provide any insights and suggestions as to the future development of the initiative in Newcastle.

## 1. **Background**

- 1.1 Let's Work Together has its origins in the death of Olive Simcock – who died in a house fire in the Stafford area in 2006. Those agencies involved in this incident came to the conclusion that, had a number of risk signs been picked up and had agencies communicated with each other more effectively, then this death could have been prevented.
- 1.2 As a result of these issues, agencies such as Staffordshire Fire & Rescue Service (FARS) established initiatives such as Olive Branch. Olive Branch was a training and awareness initiative designed to highlight fire hazards and how to spot them for those professionals visiting the homes of people in their respective areas.
- 1.3 Based on the findings from Olive Branch, it became clear that this awareness raising work could be translated across a number of risk areas, not just fire. To this end, a project team was established in Lichfield in 2010 to examine the potential for a wider version of Olive Branch.
- 1.4 This initiative was titled Let's Work Together and a pilot process in Lichfield was established, with project support offered by FARS. The pilot highlighted a number of risk areas which could be covered by LWT, including: -
  - Slips, trips and falls
  - Fire injuries and hazards
  - Crime related, including bogus callers
  - Obesity
  - Social isolation
  - Alcohol and drugs
  - Medications
- 1.5 The LWT initiative in Lichfield involved a number of key partners as part of the project group, including Lichfield DC, Staffordshire County Council, FARS and Staffordshire Police.
- 1.6 Following completion of the pilot, LWT was launched in January 2012 across Staffordshire, and a commitment was made to introduce LWT to Newcastle. Based on this commitment, a project team was put together under the management of the Head of Business Improvement and Partnerships and a project plan was developed.
- 1.7 An initial set of principles were established for LWT in Newcastle, including the commitment that the project would cover the list of risks above and any other highlighted in Newcastle; that the initiative would be rolled out borough-wide and that it would be launched as quickly as possible. The launch itself was delayed by a number of factors.
- 1.8 The Newcastle Partnership endorsed LWT as one of its three 'Priority Projects' in April 2012

## 2. **Issues**

- 2.1 During the process of developing LWT in Newcastle, a number of benefits were identified for the initiative, including: -
  - The quality of life for vulnerable people will be improved in the borough at the end of the project.

- The number of accidents and injuries in the home will be reduced in the borough at the end of the project.
  - People in the borough will feel safer and more secure in their homes and communities at the end of the project.
  - Improved partnership working at the end of the project, improving Value for Money, as partner agencies will no longer work in isolation.
  - Better detection and referral of home risks in the borough, by home visitors, by the end of the project.
- 2.2 It was agreed that LWT would seek to equip home visitors from organisations across the public sector (and potentially the private and voluntary sectors) with the basic skills to spot issues when they enter a home and to equip them with both the ability to refer the issue(s) to the relevant organisation and also to establish the referral processes so that these issues can be dealt with quickly and effectively.
- 2.3 To this end, therefore, the project team in Newcastle set about establishing how the process could work to achieve the benefits outlined above.
- 2.4 In progressing LWT, the project team encountered three major issues. These were: -
- Data sharing – how is data on individuals shared? Can it be shared? How should it be shared? How should consent be obtained from individuals?
  - Software – what software should be used for home visitors to record their visits and observations on individuals? The options included the Patchwork software developed by FutureGov on behalf of Staffordshire County Council and its partners
  - Training – what areas should LWT in Newcastle be focusing upon? What are the main risks for residents? Who should be trained in what areas and how should this training be organised?
- 2.5 In addressing these issues, the project team received updates from other key organisations involved in this process.
- 2.6 In terms of data sharing, the issue has been covered by the development of the One Staffordshire Information Sharing Protocol. This Protocol allows organisations to share data and information relevant to LWT, as it is clear that, in order to refer effectively, individuals and organisations need to be able to do so legally.
- 2.7 The project has agreed to use the Patchwork software system for the time being. Patchwork is a tool similar to Facebook in that home visitors are able to write on a ‘wall’ any observations they may have made during a visit about an individual. These comments can then be picked up by other visitors and acted upon. Given that most organisations involved in LWT use different software, it was felt that Patchwork allowed these organisations to ‘talk’ to each other and also to refer. In actual fact, lessons from the Lichfield pilot indicate that referrals can be made using paper-based systems, but Patchwork can assist with this.
- 2.8 In terms of training, a number of modules have been planned focusing on the key risk areas outlined above. The first of these took place on 28 February 2013, and focused upon safety issues. These included issues like fire hazards and anti-social behaviour (further modules are planned over the next 3-6 months focusing on issues such as debt, obesity and use of medicines). Further updates will be provided to the Committee as and when they become available.
- 2.9 The LWT initiative in Newcastle was launched in November 2013, and a number of key agencies including the Police, FARS, Staffordshire County Council and others signed up. It

is vital to continue to ensure partner buy-in to this work as it will assist the referral processes and also encourage as many staff as possible from as many organisations as possible to be part of the LWT process.

### 3. **Options**

There are no options to be considered at this stage, the report is presented for Members to note and make suggestions as to any further work on LWT.

### 4. **Proposal**

- 4.1 It is proposed that the Committee note the work ongoing to implement LWT and make any comments and suggestions as required.

### 5. **Reasons for Preferred Solution**

- 5.1 LWT is a key partnership based initiative designed to allow vulnerable people to continue to live independently and protect them from potential risks in their own homes. In order to do this, home visiting staff are trained to be aware of these issues and refer them to the appropriate agency to deal with. This report allows Members to be aware of this work and contribute as they feel necessary.

### 6. **Outcomes Linked to Sustainable Community Strategy and Corporate Priorities**

- 6.1 LWT has the potential to help deliver key outcomes across all the priorities of the Borough Council and a number of the priorities of the Newcastle Partnership.

### 7. **Legal and Statutory Implications**

- 7.1 A key area of this work is around the sharing of data and information – this is largely covered by the One Staffordshire Information Sharing Protocol, of which the Council is a signatory. .

### 8. **Equality Impact Assessment**

- 8.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is being developed for this work.

### 9. **Financial and Resource Implications**

- 9.1 There are a range of resource implications in terms of delivering LWT and these are covered in other reports.

### 10. **Major Risks**

- 10.1 The GRACE risk assessment for LWT is being developed. The key risks include not committing enough resources to these areas of work and the community and Borough continuing to deal with the ongoing issues as a result.

### 11. **Sustainability and Climate Change Implications**

No direct implications, although these issues will be part of the projects established for LWT.

### 12. **Key Decision Information**

This item is not included in the forward plan.

13. **Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions**

There are none.

14. **List of Appendices**

There are none

15. **Background Papers**

None.