



## **Disabled People's Forum**

Minutes of a meeting of the Disabled People's Forum held at Northampton's Guildhall and on Teams on Thursday 4 August 2022 at 2.30 pm.

Present            Martin deRosario (Co-Chair), Cllr Alan Chantler (Co-Chair), Dr David Smart, Emma Parry, Paul Thompson, Alex Rex, Graeme Wilson, Helene Usherwood, Nick Wilson, Amie Freeman, David Reed, Carl Weininger, Rashmi Shah, John Rawlings, Beverley Mennell, Debs Burns, Debbie MacColl

### **1. Welcomes, Introductions and Apologies**

Everyone was welcomed to the meeting and introductions were made around the table and screen.

### **2. Code of Conduct**

### **3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the last meeting were agreed as a true record.

### **4. Mental Health / Action for Happiness**

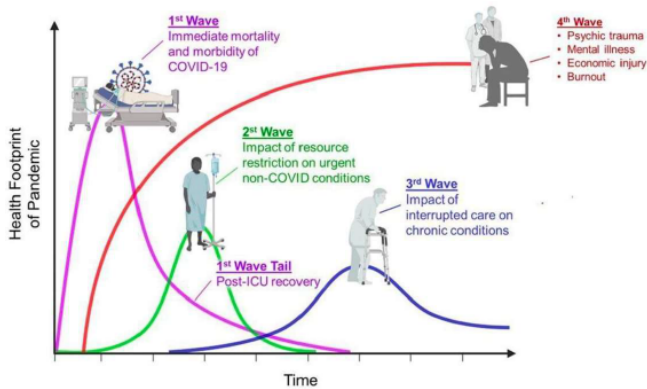
Dr David Smart introduced himself as a retired GP and a Champion of Action 4 Happiness. He asked whether there were any particular points they wanted covered. A question was asked whether it was true more women developed dementia than men. Dr Smart responded that Dementia was a condition of older age and women tend to live longer than men so, statistically, more women tend to develop dementia. Do what you can do to keep your cardio vascular system in good health.

John Rawlings asked about loneliness – with many widows and widowers living alone must be quite high for mental health problems. Dr Smart responded that loneliness definitely had an effect on mental health. One of the 10 keys of happiness was relationships, a befriending service was being rolled out across the county. Carl added that in rural communities it was likely to be higher. Another of the keys was giving – this could be volunteering time in the community which would also help recognise who the vulnerable residents were.

Beverley stated that the Welfare Reform 2015 and DWP changes saw many people having money taken away from them with a perceived link to suicide yet suicide was not just an austerity problem. Dr Smart said that poverty was the biggest issue that Public Health needed to address as a national body. There is little more important than housing and feeding oneself and family, that, along with safety forms the base of Maslow's hierarchy of needs. It can lead to eventual suicide but there were also depression and mental health disorders and unless these are seriously addressed

there would be little impact. Karl added that he had just come from the Poverty Truth Commission meeting and some of the stories were simply horrendous. Dr Smart explained that people had been affected by Covid Syndemic – where an infectious disorder interacts with non-infectious conditions as shown in a slide on page 4 of the slides reproduced below.

### “Syndemic” Impact Waves



“Covid is a Syndemic”  
- Richard Horton  
Editor of the Lancet  
  
- Context matters

@Vectorsting via Twitter.

Diagrammatic representation of anticipated impact of pandemic over time

Another slide (page 5) showed the 2008 Foresight. How nutrition matters, now early trauma impacts massively on mental health. Those with good mental health were 50% less likely to catch a cold or have cardiovascular event, 35% reduction in risk of death and significantly better overall health. Exercise in the morning reduces cortisol, the main stress hormone, this is evidence based and shows vast benefits especially in older age. Also see pages 11 and 12 slides reproduced below.

**ACTION FOR HAPPINESS**    **What's the problem?**

**Loneliness**  
**Fear**  
**Depression**  
**Anxiety**  
**Addiction**  
**Struggling**

**Millions are struggling. This is an urgent crisis!**



The 10 keys of happiness are evidence based, it is a national movement - [Happier Kinder Together | Action for Happiness](#) and there is a local hub at Delapre Abbey.

The 10 Keys are:-

- Giving – doing things for others
- Relating – connect with people
- Exercising – take care of your body
- Awareness – live life mindfully
- Trying out – keep learning new things

- Direction – have goals to look forward to
- Resilience – find ways to bounce back
- Emotions – look for what's good
- Acceptance – be comfortable with who you are
- Meaning – be part of something bigger

There was engagement at different levels:-

1. Viewing of the Action 4 Happiness calendars
2. Expert talks with international experts
3. Online coaching course
4. Happiness courses digitally and happy cafes to visit
5. Volunteer passport and champion training.

People's needs were shown on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs – housing was 1 of the foundation needs and people struggling with abusive relationships, if they could not afford their own accommodation were often stuck where they were. GP's were not the answer as all they could realistically do was to prescribe medication. The answer lay more in the community and social prescribing. Rashmi added that loneliness went deeper than just meeting with someone. Accessibility and culture differences also added complications. Resources needed to be shared across the county and not just go to those who shouted the loudest.

Nick added that he backed up what Dr Smart was saying and he had lived experience of problems related to access to services. Initially when he had been diagnosed with complex PTSD he expected the NHS to fix him with absolutely no awareness that he had control himself and so many cultures will not even speak about mental health. This needs to change and more community support groups but there isn't enough funding. Dr Smart said it was really good to have Nick on board especially for men's mental health as women were 3 times more likely to open up and seek help. Community groups matter and he encouraged the group to campaign for personal health budgets where the patient can decide how the money is spent. Cllr Chantler stated that he represented a rural area and farmers, who by the nature of their job, worked alone for long periods in isolation, and approximately 25% were below the poverty line. Many farmers were lost to suicide, people suffered abuse many not making contact for support.

Emma stated she was working with Rachel Travers to set up more happy cafes there were also about 20 Good Neighbour Schemes across the county.

Carl asked about suicide statistics. Dr Smart replied the data he had was from the coroner's office and men were more likely to use violent means. People expressed inner pain in different ways with self-harm being one of those and it could be the inability to get needs met in another way.

Graeme added that physical activity was far more than about getting fit and helped improve mental health. Northants Sport were also based at Delapre Abbey and organise a lot of group activities which could be an agenda item for a later meeting. Rasmi replied that it was a chicken and egg situation as if many people didn't get financial support with transport they could not get to activities and often initiatives to help them were not sustainable.

## 5. Cyber Protect

Amie Freeman & David from the Cyber Investigation Team

The Police worked on the 4 'P's

**Prepare** – giving advice so hopefully no one was affected.

**Prevent** – dealing with young and vulnerable people at risk of using their computer skills to attack other systems, working them to deter them and divert their skills.

**Pursue** – investigation.

**Protect** – work with and support individuals. A lot of victims suffer from loneliness and or poor mental health which is sometimes caused by cyber issues.

Passwords

- should be at least 12 characters long – a good way is putting 3 random words together.
- Ideally use different password for each site. Data breaches are where your password is accidentally released and criminals will try it on other websites to see if it is the same.
- Where possible enable 2 factor identification, this will stop the criminal even if they have the password.

Account data breach is where your passwords or other personal details have been leaked. More information can be found using the data breach site: [Have I Been Pwned: Check if your email has been compromised in a data breach](#)

Phishing – criminals are after any information they can get.

Emails - It is not always easy to identify a 'real' email, they are getting very good at making them look genuine, containing real logos and photos and may even contain your name. Do not click on any links in the email – either go to the organisation's website or ring them.

Texts - Criminals can put fake text message in amongst a thread – never trust a link in a text.

Phone calls – often pretend to be IT support or a phone company. They can spoof the number and tell you to do things on your computer that gives them control over it, Sharing information online – every time you do a quiz or click on a link to complete a form you are giving away information, it is safer to check on the organisation's website.

Courier Fraud – phone and pretend to be an organisation who is undertaking an investigation. They give a good story and tell you to go to your bank withdraw money and hand it over to a particular person. They say you will get the funds back but, of course, you would not.

Romance fraud – online dating is usually completely fine but scammers can befriend people, move them to another chat site then start giving sob stories and extracting money from the victim.

David asked for any questions to be sent in via the Forum to be forwarded to him - [forums.nbc@westnorthants.gov.uk](mailto:forums.nbc@westnorthants.gov.uk).

All cybercrime and fraud should be reported to Action Fraud 0300 123 2040

## 6. Update IDPWD Planning

Debbie explained that, following feedback after the last event, there were going to be 3 social spaces in our Council Offices for people to watch the live screening. These would be in Northampton, Daventry and Towcester – free tea and coffee would be available and there would be a 'host' in each location. Potential speakers (to be confirmed) were Neil McKenzie for Fraud, Mick Wilson on mental health, Ellie Robinson Paralympian swimmer and Born 2 Perform. Kian was confirmed as host. So we can have an idea of how many guests to expect it would be appreciated if people could book for their relevant location either via Eventbrite or phone 07826 993847 (leave a message if no answer stating which location and how many people). Eventbrite links below.

Northampton - <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/international-day-of-people-with-disabilities-northampton-tickets-403363409817>

Daventry - <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/copy-of-international-day-of-people-with-disabilities-daventry-tickets-403365195157>

Towcester - <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/international-day-of-people-with-disabilities-towcester-tickets-403369688597>

## 7. Community Information Exchange

## 8. Items for Future Meetings

Mental Health – Nick Wilson

Accessible play equipment for children with disabilities in our parks and play areas.

Discussion around communications with other Disability Groups

**9. Date of Next Meeting**

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