

## RSN Seminar: Rural Vulnerability

Date: 5<sup>th</sup> October 2020

Subject: Rural Vulnerability

Chair: Councillor Mary Robinson, Eden District Council

Host: Online Event via Zoom

### Learning Outcomes

#### 3 Examples of Good Practice

- [Farming Community Network](#)<sup>1</sup> provide a range of support to the farming community through Volunteers who are on hand to provide free, practical, and pastoral support to anyone who seeks help. All cases are treated with confidentiality. They are shortly going to be doing a research project with the University of Exeter to explore how farmers manage social isolation, loneliness, and mental health issues. Conducted by the Centre for Rural Policy Research (CRPR) and scheduled to conclude September 2021.
- [CAB South Hams](#)<sup>2</sup> are developing a system of virtual support where technology will be available in locations within communities, set up by volunteers to enable people to contact the CAB and receive their assured support and guidance to deal with issues, a virtual 'video booth'.
- [Southern Water](#)<sup>3</sup> – Utilities can face difficulties in identifying vulnerable customers to be able to support them, often if people come forward with problems paying water bills they are at crisis point with other debts so they work with Experian data and do modelling to target their messages at those that need support.

#### 5 Key Learning Points

- A joined-up approach across agencies dealing with different elements of rural vulnerability is vital to enable the most targeted support for communities.
- Need to be horizon scanning to be aware of future demands and impacts of events such as Brexit on service delivery.
- Customer needs can change due to external events and businesses, and service delivery needs to be able to adapt to deal with it. For example, the South Hams CAB were faced with a different set of customers during lockdown that needed their services and they had to adapt to support them.
- Importance of linking with local groups and informal groups is critical, lockdown saw the development of a range of groups that were not in existence before but have key local knowledge of customers to enable appropriate service delivery.
- [Statistical Digest of Rural England](#)<sup>4</sup> (Defra) – chapter on Deprivation is on page 163 onwards.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.fcn.org.uk](http://www.fcn.org.uk)

<sup>2</sup> <https://southhamscab.org.uk/>

<sup>3</sup> [www.southernwater.co.uk](http://www.southernwater.co.uk)

<sup>4</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/861861/01\\_Statistical\\_Digest\\_of\\_Rural\\_England\\_2020\\_January\\_edition.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/861861/01_Statistical_Digest_of_Rural_England_2020_January_edition.pdf)

Providing a voice for rural communities and service providers

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