Rural Services Network
Rural Health and Social Care Sub Group meeting

Date: 16th November 2020
Subject: Rural Health and Social Care
Chair: Councillor Cecilia Motley, Shropshire Council
Hosted: Online Event via Zoom

Learning Outcomes
Key issues highlighted by speakers

Ian Morrell, 65 High Street Health Hub

- The Town Council underpinned the No 65 initiative but labelling as such was avoided as a feel of community operation was important.
- Places connect people and the community needs places to go to be together.
- COVID had shown the importance of community connection and of family.
- Digital can be insular in its approach. Connections were best based on both it and communities and family contact.
- In a post-covid world, there will be more reliance on public health and a community approach at dealing with this is best
- The need for community interaction groups had been shown throughout the pandemic and this can be through established groups
- The need for Hub Groups like 65 might be even greater in the difficult times which would follow the pandemic.
- The importance of digital skills in accessing services is growing but there needs to be the support in training, and enable people to use them

Billy Palmer, Nuffield Trust

- The Nuffield Trust was an independent think tank. It had grown out of the root of independent hospitals many of whom had been in rural areas.
- Research undertaken around COVID had shown often problems existed in rural /remote areas.
- There were four key areas that were being explored in terms of rural data, the workforce, (recruitment/retention), distance (travel costs and staff down time travelling), Funding (discretionary funding cuts etc), and capacity (access to extra resources and the resilience of the sector)
- There were, as the pandemic had progressed, in terms of % of population significantly more people shielding in rural areas.
- And yet for A&E and clinic attendances in relation to issues including Mental Health ones the drop off rates from people in rural areas was significantly higher than the already worrying national trend.

Graham Biggs, Rural Services Network

- Revitalising Rural Campaign due to be launched in February 2021 articulating policy asks of Government in a number of key areas.

Providing a voice for rural communities and service providers

- Extensive consultation with membership of RSN.
- 16 key areas, should not be considered in isolation as different elements are vital to ensure sustainable rural communities and successful rural economies to support the national economy
- Document sets out the national policy context for each area along with key asks
- https://www.rsnonline.org.uk/revitalising-rural You can access all of the sections at this link.
- The section on Access to Health Services is available at this link: https://rsnonline.org.uk/images/Revitalising%20Rural/final-branded-copies/Accessible_Health_and_Care_Servi.pdf
- The document would be kept current as circumstances changed etc. as this was the RSN's Policy Framework for the life of the current Parliament. Members would be kept informed on changes.
- Revitalising Rural would be the overarching context of the 9 Seminars in 2021 and the National Conference.

Any other key points discussed

- Graham Biggs detailed the House of Lords Announcement that their COVID19 Committee had invited the RSN to submit evidence to its Inquiry about long term impacts of the reliance on digital.
- Key Terms of reference focus on:
  - Physical Health
  - Mental Health
  - Social Interaction
  - Quality of Working Life
- A Survey would shortly go to members to help inform the RSN submission.

Next Meeting of the Group would be held on the 12th of April

Providing a voice for rural communities and service providers

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