

## Voluntary and Community Sector Grants

### Summary of Progress 2022/23

#### Age UK Sevenoaks and Tonbridge

As with the previous financial years, 2022-2023 has been particularly challenging as our budgets have been constrained. As we lost £290K in funding from KCC and costs have risen due to cost-of-living crisis, we are having to look at cutting costs and making savings. Our arrangement with sharing a Chief Officer with Age UK Maidstone continues and we are also looking at other ways of saving money including closing one of our offices in Sevenoaks and moving more services to Tonbridge.

On positive note, we were successful as part of a West Kent Consortium in winning the contract to provide Dementia Services in Tonbridge. We are now currently offering various activities at Town Lock such as COGS, Dementia Cafes and Young Onset groups and peer support. This is a much-needed service especially as the Alzheimer's Association stopped providing face to face services in the town just before Covid.

The Information and Advice team continue to work in the Tonbridge and Malling area and our Tonbridge Office continues to be a hub. Between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 and 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022, the office responded to 1752 signposting queries as well as providing specific information and advice to 914 clients. Of these, 107 have been supported to claim benefits. We have improved their lives (financially) to the tune of £9423 per week or £489,996 per year. We are now back to running a face-to-face service with clients being given a choice of phone calls, home visits or coming into the office to complete forms. This is especially important as a lot of advice services have turned to providing remote support only which older people find difficult to access. The cost-of-living crisis along with issues in the care system has also meant that we have seen an increase in the number of people asking for help in finding out what benefits and help that they are entitled to.

In addition to Information and Advice, the other services that we offer in Tonbridge include a Knit and Natter craft group, a coffee morning and a lunch club, Befriending, Independent Living Support and Dementia Outreach. We also run various Pop-In Strength, Balance and Mobility classes in some of the more rural parts of the district including Ryarsh, Golden Green and Aylesford.

With regards to transport to the Hollybush Day Centre, we currently have 16 clients attending regularly from the Tonbridge area (3 attend social day care and 13 attend Dementia Day Care). Of those attending, 2 are currently brought in by Age UK transport and the others make their own way. We also opened Dementia Day Care in Tonbridge on Friday at the beginning of January, and we currently have 8 clients attending (3 of these also attend Hollybush). 3 of these use Age UK transport.

We are hoping to continue growing services for the remainder of this financial year and into next. With moving more of our services to Tonbridge and having our main

office based in the town, we are hoping to be able to embed ourselves into the community and offer more support to the older residents of the borough.

### **Maidstone and West Kent Mediation**

Below are the total figures for mediation services throughout Tonbridge & Malling, please be advised this is up to January 2023 and we have two more months to carry out under the 22/23 SLA.

- Community/neighbour mediation 7
- Family mediation 7
- Anger management 3
- 7 schools received mediation awareness training to approximately 240 students and a further 84 trained to become mediators within the school environment.
- We have scheduled mediation awareness training for partners and also scheduled a volunteer mediator 4-day training course to attract more volunteers both to be held in February.