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A map of Nottinghamshire and surrounding areas in the UK, showing various districts like Mansfield, Hucknall, and Nottingham. The map is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue and cyan color. The title text is centered over the map.

***Why Place Matters for Loneliness:
Harnessing Local Community Identity
to Reduce Loneliness***

Prof Clifford Stevenson
Nottingham Trent University

Loneliness as public health issue

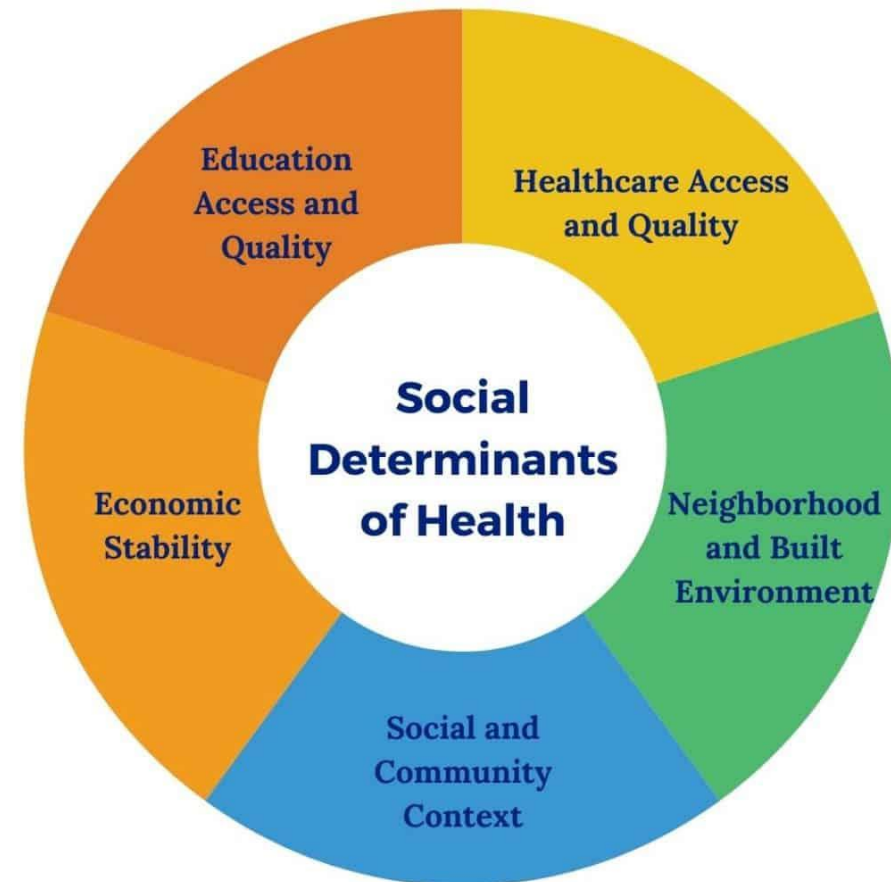
Loneliness kills: Social connectedness improves health, lengthens life

- Loneliness recognised as major contributor to illness and mortality
 - Equivalent to smoking
 - Greater than obesity
- Social connections can improve health and wellbeing
 - Can halve mortality rate in next year among older adults
- Need to better understanding how it occurs and how to tackle it

‘Place-based’ approaches to health and wellbeing

Loneliness now recognised as a Social Determinant of Health

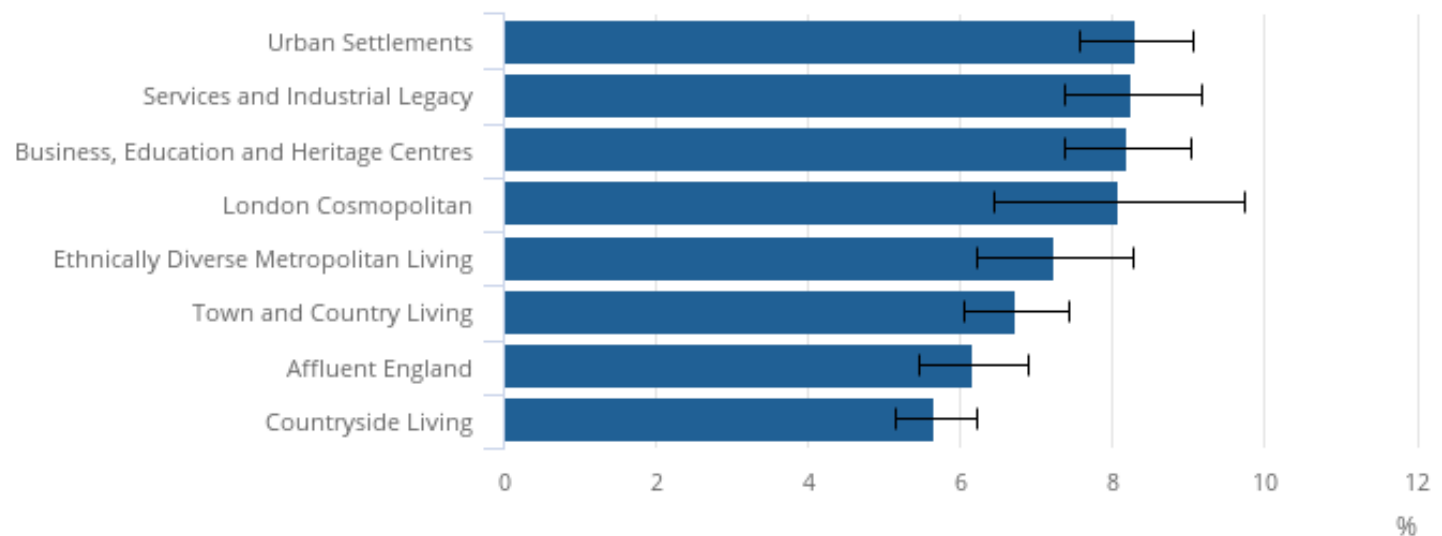
- Operate at local level
- Explain 30-55% health outcomes
- Are responsible for health inequalities
- Cause and are caused by other SDTs



How does place have these effects on loneliness?

‘Lonelygenic’ environments

- Poverty and unemployment
- Absence of shared spaces and facilities
- Lack of transport infrastructure
- Lack of green space and cover
- Fear of crime and ASB
- Prejudice and discrimination
 - against local area
 - against vulnerable groups

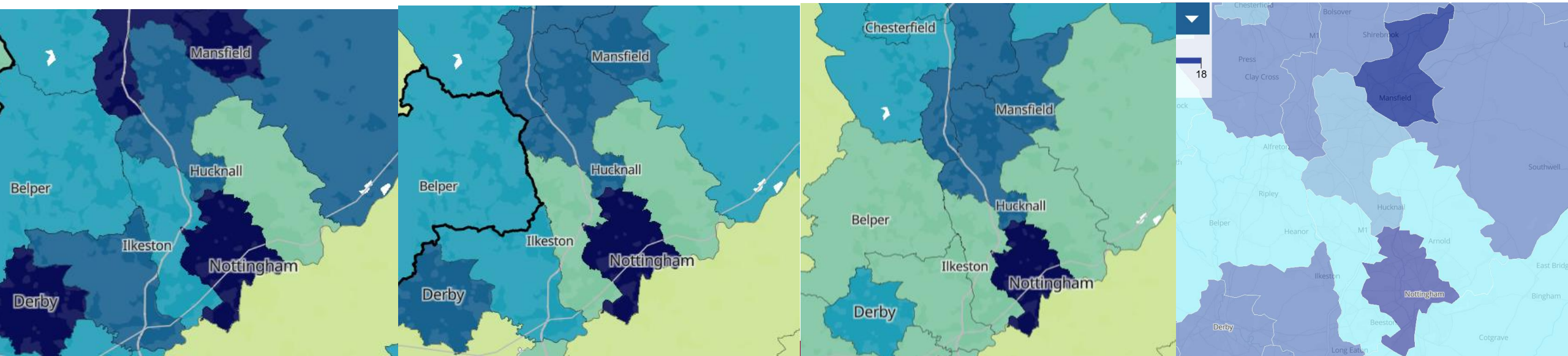


Which places are lonely in Nottingham/shire?

Co-occurrence of SDHs in specific areas

- Poor work, household poverty, ill health, loneliness

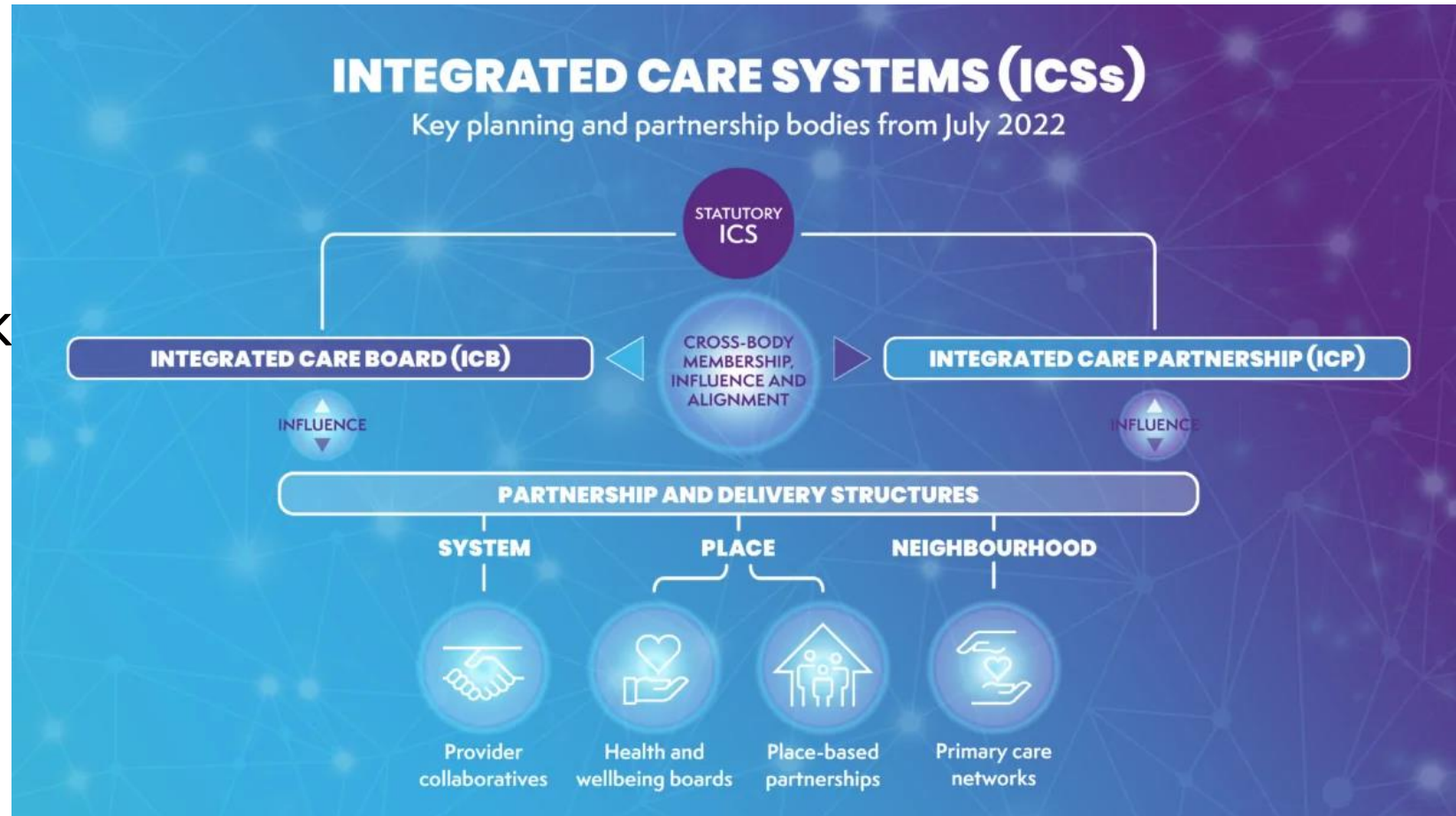
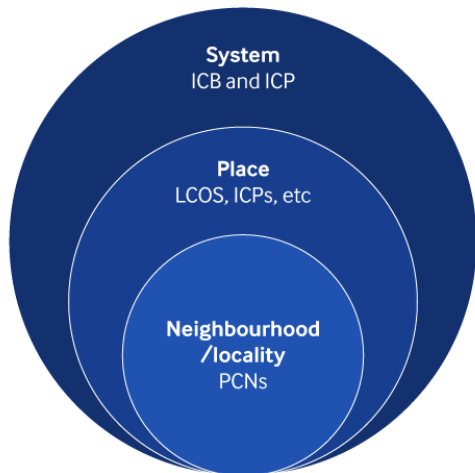
(Maps 1,2,3 from Census 2021, Map 4 from Office for National Statistics - Opinions and Lifestyle Survey 2021-22)



NHS Place-based approaches

Size of unit

- System: 500k – 3m
- Place: 250k – 500k
- Neighbourhood: 30-70k



Social Prescribing as NHS place-based approach to loneliness

Link Workers attached to PCNs

- LWs can be targeted towards specific demographics, life challenges



Some challenges for place-based approaches to loneliness

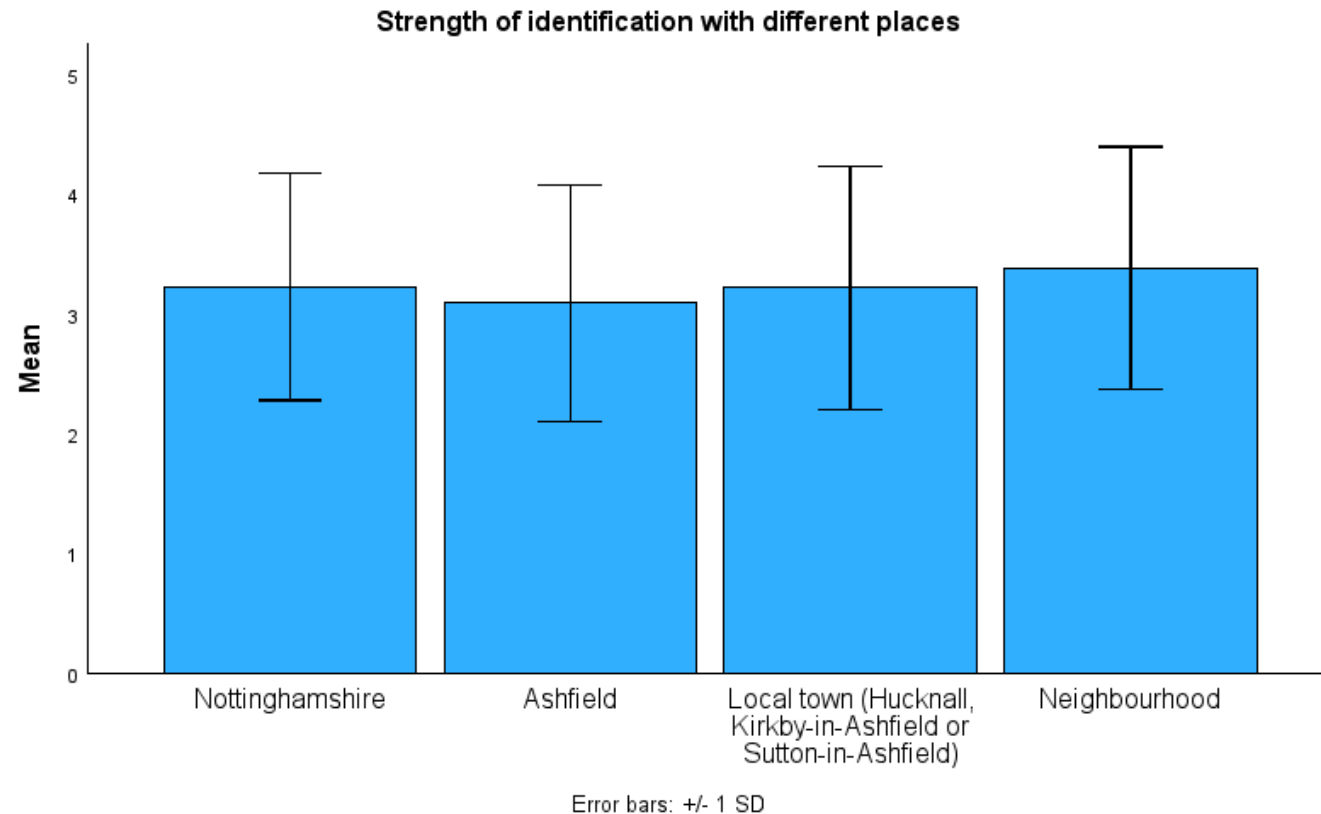
Loneliness is still treated as an individual-level problem

- Most individuals referred for symptoms rather than causes
- Areas of highest loneliness often have the fewest assets and resources
- Places and populations who would benefit most are 'hardest to reach'
- NHS 'places' and 'neighbourhoods' less relevant to residents



What sense of place matters to residents?

- NTU research: Survey of 1270 residents of Ashfield, Mansfield, Newark and Sherwood
- Asking about feelings about local area
- Asked how strongly identify with:
 - Neighbourhood
 - Town
 - Ashfield
 - Nottinghamshire



Predictors of loneliness in mid-Notts

Neighbourhood identity is strongest predictor of lower loneliness

- Higher loneliness predicted by:

- Gender
- Disability
- Age
- LGBT status
- Financial hardship
- Mental illness

Place	Correlation with loneliness	Predictor of loneliness
Neighbourhood	-.274	Significant
Town	-.166	Non-significant
District	-.140	Non-significant
County	-.131	Non-significant

- Lower loneliness predicted by:

- Number of local community groups
- Neighbourhood identification
- Support from neighbours

How can neighbourhoods reduce loneliness?

Shared social environment:

- Feelings of belonging and acceptance
- Shared spaces and activities
- Neighbourliness

Cooperation and collective action:

- Informal activism
- Formal volunteering
- Political representation

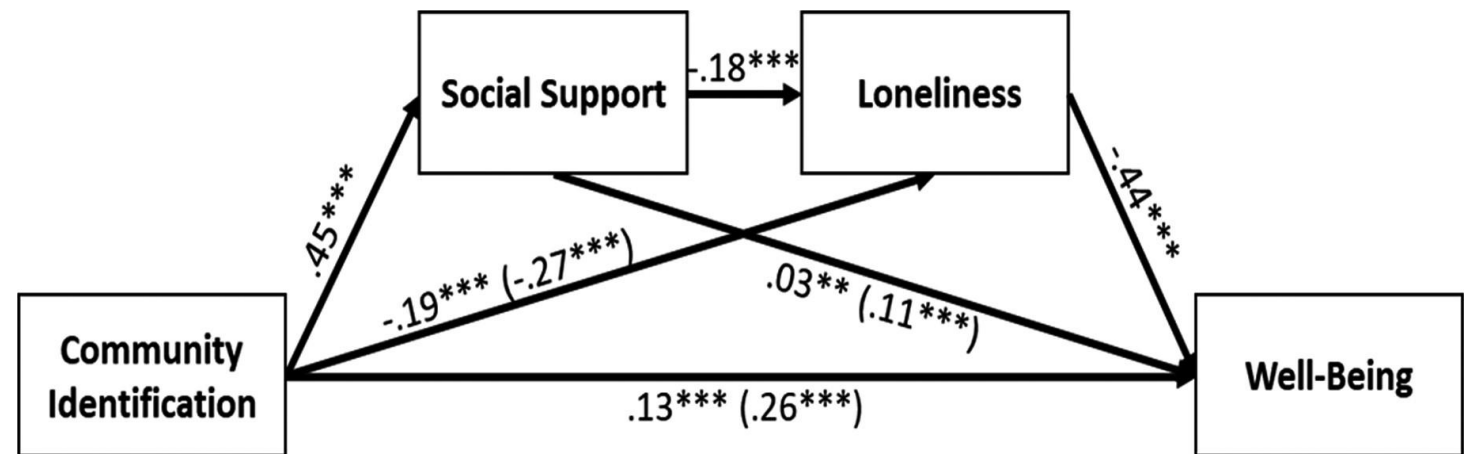
Shared reputation:

- Pride and sense of continuity



How does neighbourhood identity reduce loneliness?

- UK Government Community Life Survey - Representative sample (n=4314)
- Bespoke survey in two local neighbourhoods in Nottinghamshire
 - Beeston (n=452)
 - Ladybrook (n=167)
- MidNotts survey (n=1270)



Implications

- Neighbourhood support associated with loneliness reduction
 - Directly via feelings of belonging
 - Indirectly by being supported by neighbours
 - Multiple groups have added benefits
- Less affluent communities may experience limits to support
 - Lack of resources to share
 - Potentially suppressing effects of stigma
- How can this be used for loneliness reduction?



Connecting Social Prescribing to place

- The Thriving Communities Fund: *Inspiring Ashfield*
 - *To support local VCFSE projects that bring together place-based partnerships to improve and increase the range and reach of available social prescribing community activities.*
- Coordinate and support 21 activities over the course of the year
- Connecting SP referrals to activities
- With a goal of enhancing a positive sense of place and neighbourhood connection



National
Academy
for Social
Prescribing



Ashfield
VOLUNTARY ACTION

FIRST!
ART!



Ashfield

DISTRICT COUNCIL

Making the initiative place-based

- Scoping local need, co-producing activities
- Locating activities in familiar, accessible places
- Using green activities to connect to place
- Targeted outreach to vulnerable residents in 'asset desserts'
- Providing multiple activities for complex needs



FIGHT THE STIGMA
SESSIONS FOR YOUNG MEN TO IMPROVE MENTAL & PHYSICAL HEALTH

Sessions are free and will provide a safe environment to discuss and improve mental & physical health.

EVERY TUESDAY FOR 6 WEEKS
7 SEPT - 19 OCT | 7-8 PM
JOHN GODBER CENTRE, HUCKMALL

LIMITED SPACES AVAILABLE!
Contact Ashfield Voluntary Action to book:
01623 55 55 51 | info@ashfieldvoluntaryaction.org.uk

A six-week introduction to
Mindfulness & Tai Chi Qigong
FOR CARERS

Every Monday from
28 June - 2 August
(11:30 - 13:00)

Ashfield Voluntary Action, Health & Wellbeing Centre, Kirby, NG17 7AE

Led by Lynne Mason, this course will give carers an opportunity to experience mindfulness and Tai Chi Qigong movements in our 'secret garden'. Join us to find your inner-peace...

LIMITED SPACES AVAILABLE!
Please contact: 01623 55 55 51
info@ashfieldvoluntaryaction.org.uk

DRAMA CLASSES FOR CARERS

21 JULY - 25 AUGUST
SUTTON ACADEMY THEATRE

A SERIES OF FREE WORKSHOPS delivered by local actor, Claire Finn. COME ALONG AND EXPLORE ways of expression and meet other carers in a fun and friendly environment!

**** LIMITED SPACES AVAILABLE ****
Contact Ashfield Voluntary Action to reserve your place on: 01623 55 55 51
info@ashfieldvoluntaryaction.org.uk

Give it a go! **FREE** Nordic Walking FOR FAMILIES

All equipment provided. Booking essential. For all ages and abilities. Improves health & well-being

Sutton Lawn and Kingsway Park

Taking place weekly

SUTTON LAWN - Mon 21 June - Mon 26 July (10:00 - 11:30)
KINGSWAY PARK - Tues 22 June - Tues 27 July (10:00 - 11:30)

TO BOOK YOUR PLACE/ MORE INFO PLEASE CONTACT:
01623 55 55 51 | info@ashfieldvoluntaryaction.org.uk

Evidence for main outcomes



Improved health outcomes

Individual reports of profound effect on lives

Some indication of positive trends in outcomes

Strongest effects with multiple connections



Thriving third sector

Activities delivered as planned, some enduring effects

Better connections between Social Prescribers and community organisations

Better recognition of the challenges of post-pandemic environment



Enhanced place identity

Strong associations between community identification and wellbeing

Some evidence that activities increased perceptions of community support and connectedness

Conclusion: We need to tackle loneliness in its place

- Loneliness is not a problem with individuals, it is located in places
- Place can have a negative impact upon health and wellbeing and increase loneliness
- But local community is also the solution: connecting to local community unlocks support which reduces loneliness
- Interventions will be more effective when they connect people to place
- Local community infrastructure organisations are well placed to create and sustain a sense of positive local community identity